

Open Letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Nadine Kaddoura
Founder @CERTIORARIS and former UN Senior Staff
12 February 2026

To:

Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

cc:

Mr. Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General, OIOS

Mr. Khaled El-Enany, Director General, UNESCO

Mr. Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet

**Subject: Response to the Spokesperson statements during 11 February 2026 noon Briefing
Re: Open Letter – former UN staff member Fabrice Aidan, Epstein Correspondence, and
the UN’s Duty to Disclose Disciplinary Measures (including ClearCheck measures)**

This Letter is for the Record.

Following my open letter to the Secretary-General on Fabrice Aidan, we have received a minimal and highly partial answer through the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General during yesterday’s noon briefing at UNHQ. The response does not resolve the questions raised; instead, it introduces a contradiction that undermines the credibility of the UN’s position. The Spokesperson’s response is worth examining carefully and contains multiple inaccuracies, to say the least.

The exchange is quoted verbatim as follows:

“Question: My second question. There is a UN staff. His name is Fabrice Aidan, whose name had been mentioned several times in Epstein files. He was passing messages from UN email to Terje Rod-Larsen to Epstein. And you have received a letter, and the SG received a letter asking why he was not investigated. When some UN staff showed some sympathy for Palestinians, they were instructed...”

Spokesman: Well, I mean...

Question: To be quiet. But this case...

Spokesman: Abdelhamid, it's a very valid question, but I wish you'd get your facts right. Mr. Aidan is not a UN staff member. He was a French diplomat who was seconded to the United Nations from about 2003 to 2013. He resigned in April 2013. At the time of his resignation, there was a disciplinary process under way against him on a specific matter. Now like many people, I've looked at a lot of the Epstein documents, and I can tell you that obviously

there was no way for us to be aware of, we don't monitor staff's emails, so we have no way of, or people's emails, we have no way of knowing what people are doing with their emails. It is clear that looking at what was sent, it was violation of procedures to send from a UN email documents that he should not have been sharing outside of the UN.

Question: What about Terje Rod-Larsen? He was a UN staff, and you know he was. And... and also, Aidan was a UN staff, and he signed his letters as [cross-talk].

Spokesman: Right. But what is your point? Because I'm telling you, he has not worked in the United Nations since April 2013. He resigned. At the time of his resignation, he was under investigation. Mr. Larsen stopped being a full time UN staff member on 31 December 2004. He was then, when actually employed, or a dollar a year, envoy while he served as President of IPI. I can tell you that our focus and everybody's focus should be on ensuring that everyone follows our procedures and, also, focused on the victims of Mr. Epstein."

The Spokesperson instructed the journalist to “*get your facts right.*” The facts are not in dispute. They are documented, public, and verifiable. What is in dispute is the UN’s attempt to reframe those facts through selective terminology and incomplete disclosure.

1- Seconded Personnel Remain Subject to UN Administrative Jurisdiction

The UN Staff Regulations and Rules explicitly contemplate secondments and arrangements whereby individuals serve within the Secretariat under a UN appointment while remaining linked to their government administration. In practice, these individuals receive an index number, occupy a post, exercise UN functions, and are subject to UN internal governance and conduct requirements.

A person seconded from a government does not become exempt from UN accountability simply because the salary originates elsewhere. A secondment does not create a parallel moral universe where UN ethics do not apply. The UN itself has a clear administrative framework for this category of personnel. Accordingly, the attempt to present Mr. Aidan’s secondment as proof that he was “not UN staff” is misleading and has no bearing on the applicability of the UN’s Staff Regulations, Rules, and disciplinary jurisdiction.

2- The UN cannot deny staff status while invoking an internal OIOS disciplinary process

The Spokesperson’s answer collapses under its own weight in the very next sentence.

He claims Aidan was “*not a UN staff member,*” but then states:

“At the time of his resignation, there was a disciplinary process under way against him...”

An internal OIOS disciplinary process presupposes UN jurisdiction, and therefore UN staff status. Aidan was apparently not “*not UN staff*”, yet the UN confirms he was under an internal OIOS disciplinary process. OIOS and the UN disciplinary framework exist to investigate alleged misconduct within the Organization and to ensure compliance with the Staff Regulations and Rules by staff members serving under UN authority.

Either Mr. Aidan was subject to a UN OIOS disciplinary process, or he was not.

The United Nations cannot simultaneously assert that an individual falls outside the staff system, while also confirming that the individual was subject to an internal OIOS disciplinary process. It presupposes UN administrative jurisdiction and applies to personnel serving under UN authority and bound by the Staff Regulations and Rules.

The UN cannot rely on the terminology of “*secondment*” to dilute or recharacterize accountability. Staff members seconded from government service or from other organizations remain subject to the UN regulatory framework, including the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service. Secondment is an administrative modality; it does not constitute an exemption from UN obligations, nor does it remove an individual from the Organization’s disciplinary jurisdiction.

Mr. Aidan was not operating in a vacuum. He was serving as a full-time P-5 official within the UN Secretariat under a letter of appointment reflecting his secondment from the French Government. That administrative detail has no bearing whatsoever on the applicability of the UN’s internal legal framework to his conduct.

3- The Spokesperson confirmed the breach of UN confidentiality procedures

In the most consequential part of the briefing, the Spokesperson expressly acknowledged that the material transmitted from the official UN email account constituted a breach of UN procedures. He stated:

“It is clear that looking at what was sent, it was violation of procedures to send from a UN email documents that he should not have been sharing outside of the UN.”

This statement amounts to a public confirmation by the UN Secretariat that the correspondence released in the Epstein files reflects an unauthorized disclosure of internal UN documents. The Secretariat itself has acknowledged that the conduct was incompatible with UN rules governing confidentiality and the handling of official information.

4- Terje Rød-Larsen: the UN’s own rules on gratis personnel prohibit precisely this conduct

The Spokesperson further attempted to neutralize Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen’s involvement by emphasizing that he ceased to be a full-time UN staff member on 31 December 2004 and later served as a “*dollar-a-year*” envoy while he served as President of IPI. This distinction is legally irrelevant. Whether staff or non-staff, Mr. Rød-Larsen was operating under UN authority and entrusted with access to sensitive information. The applicable obligations of confidentiality and discretion therefore remained fully engaged.

The Spokesperson’s explanation does not exonerate Mr. Rød-Larsen. On the contrary, it confirms that he continued to operate within the UN system under an engagement modality that falls squarely within the Organization’s administrative framework governing non-staff personnel.

The applicable instrument is ST/AI/1999/6 (Gratis personnel), which governs individuals serving within UN offices while not holding a standard staff appointment. The instruction is explicit: such personnel are bound by UN rules on confidentiality and are prohibited from communicating non-public information to external persons.

Section 11.2 of ST/AI/1999/6 provides:

*“Gratis personnel shall exercise the utmost discretion in all matters relating to their functions. Unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate official in the receiving office, **they may not communicate at any time** to the media or to any institution, **person**, Government or other external authority **any information that has not been made public, and which has become known to them by reason of their association with the United Nations or the receiving office.**”*

They may not use any such information without the written authorization of the appropriate official, and such information may never be used for personal gain. These obligations shall continue after the end of their service with the United Nations.”

Accordingly, even assuming arguendo that Mr. Rød-Larsen’s engagement was on a “*dollar-a-year*” basis, the UN’s own administrative instructions make clear that he remained bound by strict confidentiality obligations. The transmission of Security Council briefings, internal diplomatic readouts, and privileged conversations, or other non-public UN information to an external private individual would constitute a direct breach of the applicable UN regulatory framework.

The Secretariat’s attempt to emphasize Mr. Rød-Larsen’s contractual modality therefore does not constitute an explanation. It underscores the institutional failure: individuals operating under UN authority, whether staff or gratis personnel, appear to have been able to transmit sensitive information externally over an extended period without effective oversight, accountability, or transparent consequences.

5- UNESCO’s subsequent recruitment of Fabrice Aidan is indefensible

It is now established that the UN Secretariat introduced an explicit, systematized mechanism for recording misconduct-related separations through ST/AI/2017/1 (26 October 2017), which provides for a “**note to file**” in the Official Status File when a staff member resigns before completion of disciplinary proceedings. ClearCheck was subsequently introduced as a system-wide vetting mechanism in 2018.

But even before ClearCheck existed, every UN entity had a duty to conduct meaningful reference checks and consult prior UN service records. And yet, Fabrice Aidan reportedly was reemployed by UNESCO under Audrey Azoulay’s leadership between 2019 and 2023.

This raises the unavoidable question: how was a person who resigned from the UN Secretariat in 2013, while under a full-fledged disciplinary process, later allowed to return to the UN system? Who facilitated his recruitment and how?

6- Information Governance and Internal Security Controls

While it is fully accepted that the United Nations does not and should not engage in indiscriminate monitoring of staff email communications, this does not absolve the Organization of its duty to maintain effective governance, information security controls, and safeguards over the handling of privileged and confidential material.

The transmission of Security Council briefings, internal diplomatic readouts, and sensitive documentation is not an administrative triviality: it is precisely the type of information that should be protected through clear access controls, classification protocols, audit mechanisms, and enforceable confidentiality procedures.

If such material can be repeatedly extracted from official UN channels and transmitted externally over an extended period without detection, mitigation, or consequence, the issue is no longer limited to individual misconduct, it reflects a systemic failure of internal oversight and information governance

Finally, it is difficult to ignore the Spokesperson's attempt to close the exchange by suggesting that *"everybody's focus should be... on the victims of Mr. Epstein."*

No one disputes the centrality of the victims in this criminal case. However, coming from the United Nations, this statement is disingenuous. The UN has repeatedly failed to adopt a genuinely victim-centred approach in its own internal misconduct cases, particularly those involving harassment and sexual abuse.

The Organization continues to receive and systematically mishandle countless reports from staff members, disproportionately women, many of whom refrain from reporting altogether due to well-founded fear of retaliation, and many of whom did report only to see their cases buried without meaningful consequence for perpetrators.

The UN should begin by demonstrating accountability towards its own internal victims before invoking *"victim-centred"* rhetoric as a means of deflecting legitimate questions of institutional responsibility.

It is also important to underscore that thousands of UN staff members are dismayed by the Fabrice Aidan case precisely because it stands in stark contrast to the stringent disciplinary measures routinely applied to ordinary staff members for minor deviations, perceived reputational issues, or administrative technicalities. Staff members are sanctioned, separated, or threatened for far less. Yet in this case, the documented misuse of official UN channels to transmit sensitive information externally appears to have unfolded over years with no transparent accountability.

This disparity raises serious questions not only about oversight and information governance, but also about vetting, institutional protection, privileged access, and the unequal application of rules within the Organization. It reinforces a perception widely shared among staff: that UN accountability is not applied uniformly, and that those embedded in elite networks or connected to influential figures are treated under a different standard than the workforce expected to comply without exception.

The United Nations can do better and must do better.

Respectfully,

Nadine Kaddoura
Founder, CERTIORARIS
Former United Nations Senior Staff

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nadine Kaddoura". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nadine" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Kaddoura".