



Dag-Inge Ulstein
Minister of International Development
Norway

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29 July 2020

Dear Dag-Inge Ulstein,

Re: Donations by the Norwegian People's Aid to the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)

We are UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) an organisation which uses the law against attempts to undermine, attack and delegitimise Israel, Israeli organisations, Israelis, and supporters of Israel.

We are writing because we are very concerned that Norwegian tax payers' money is being used to fund UAWC, an NGO closely linked to a terrorist organisation, and that apparently employs active terrorists. We have written two letters to Norwegian People's Aid about this issue: the first on 14 June 2019 and the second on 27 July 2020.

We enclose an updated report on the links between UAWC and the PFLP.

In our first letter to NPA dated 14 June 2019 we sought details about its due diligence process in deciding to make such donations. We also sent them information on the links between various current and past officers of the UAWC with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist group. NPA failed to terminate payments to UAWC, despite having received the information that its employees past and present were linked to the PFLP. NPA stated in response to our information: "*We do not find the accusations substantiated in this case.*"

It is unfortunate that NPA failed to heed the warnings, because just a few months after we sent the June 2019 letter, two of the then current senior officers of UAWC, plus another person who had recently left UAWC were accused of taking part in a terrorist atrocity which killed 17 year old Rina Shnerb and injured her father and brother in August 2019.

These three men were arrested as part of a 50 person PFLP terrorist cell linked to the Shnerb murder, and some previous PFLP attacks, as well as plans for future attacks. Two of

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them (Farraj and Arbid) are currently on trial for the Shnerb murder and the third (Aboudi) was sentenced to a year in prison in June 2020, having been arrested last November 2019.

Abdul Razaq Farraj, who was the [finance director of UAWC](#), was [arrested by the IDF in late 2019](#) as part of the 50 person PFLP terror network. According to his indictment, he authorized the 23 August 2019 bombing of the Schnerb family, which killed 17 year old Rina Shnerb and injured her father and brother.

In our letter to NPA dated 14 June 2019 we wrote the following about Mr Farraj:

“Abd al-Al-Razeq Farraj,¹ former UAWC director of Administrative and Financial Affairs, was arrested many times since 1986 by Israeli security forces and was sentenced to 6 and 4.5 year imprisonment terms (in 1986 and 1993 respectively). He was re-arrested by administrative order in 2002, 2009 and 2011. The Israeli military court in the West Bank upheld the administrative arrest based on classified intelligence information. The military court noted that Abd al-Al-Razeq Farraj is an operative of PFLP and that his release may constitute a danger to the security of the area.”

We now know that despite his criminal background, and despite his various arrests, Mr Farraj had been employed by UAWC for the past 30 years. He was finance director at the time of his arrest in November 2019. He was a senior official, central to the organisation, and yet he was a PFLP member, and a man who has been accused of carrying out a terrorist atrocity and is now on trial for that atrocity. It would not have taken much due diligence to spot his affiliation with the PFLP.

Samer Mina Salim Arbid, was [Financial Director of the UAWC](#) from around 2015 to 2016. He is also currently on trial for commanding [the PLFP terror cell](#) that carried out the bomb attack on Rina Shnerb and her family. A [Jerusalem Post article published on 5 October 2019](#) stated that Arbid is “one of the PFLP’s officials in Ramallah and was previously arrested for involvement in terrorist activities during the Second Intifada under the direct command of the PFLP leadership, preparing explosive devices and committing terrorist attacks.” Arbid was described by Amnesty International in September 2019 as [“a member of the PFLP”](#). Arbid may have been employed by UAWC at the time of his arrest in 2019 because chairman of UAWC, Rizk Al Barghouthi [refers to Arbid as a “colleague” in October 2019](#) at a protest march against his arrest, as reported in the Arab press.

We were not aware in June 2019 but we are now aware that **Ubai Aboudi** was the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of UAWC from October 2015 to the present time according to his own [Linked In profile](#). He is also Executive Director of Bisan Center for Research & Development. Both Aboudi and Farraj appeared as UAWC representatives in a [Facebook post](#) on 2 February 2017 celebrating the signing of an \$11.25m contract with the Dutch Government, so both were at that time important officers in the UAWC organisation.

On 13 November 2019 [Aboudi was arrested](#), and issued with a four month administrative detention order, and on [2 June 2020, Israel’s military court](#) in Ofer sentenced Aboudi to 12 months in Israeli prison and a fine of 2,500 NIS (approximately \$720 USD). [Aboudi is](#)

¹ <https://www.frontline.in/world-affairs/fighting-for-dignity/article6141906.ece>

[referred to in the indictment of Abdul Razaq Farraj as a PFLP member](#) who met with Farraj in September 2019, when Farraj allegedly told Aboudi to recruit more members to the cell.

Aboudi also has a history of involvement with the PFLP. In early [2005 he was arrested](#), along with two others in a PFLP terrorist cell, who were planning an attack at the Latrun Armory Museum and to carry out a shooting attack against an IDF vehicle and abduct the soldiers' bodies. Aboudi was [also arrested in 2010](#), and had spent over four years in Israeli prisons on charges including membership of the PFLP, according to an Amnesty International report.

Facebook Page of the Netherlands Representative Office in Ramallah – 2 Feb 2017



Identities of the UAWC officers in the Netherlands Facebook photo.



Rezk Al Barghouti is the [current Chairman](#) of UAWC. He also has strong connections with the PFLP: **In 2016** Barghouti was the spokesman for [Ahmad Sa'adat](#), the Secretary-General of the PFLP and a convicted terrorist imprisoned by Israel during a [ceremony held in Ramallah for Palestinian prisoners](#). In 2014, UAWC members including Barghouti, participated in a [PFLP delegation to Brazil](#). On 5 August 2017 Barghouti posted on Facebook a [eulogy for Ammar Tirawi](#), a Palestinian terrorist who carried out two shooting attacks on 15 July 2017, referring to him as a hero.

Fouad Abu Seif is [Director General of UAWC](#). He was [arrested in July 2012](#) after his house in Hebron was stormed by reinforced forces from the army. The UAWC [denounced](#) his arrest.

We now have a great deal more evidence of links between the UAWC and the PFLP than we had a year ago when we first wrote to NPA. The details are in the attached Document. All this information is publicly available.

We note that following a question in the Norwegian Parliament, the Norwegian government responded in March this year to allegations regarding UAWC as follows:

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is aware of the accusations against one of UAWC's employees, Samer Arbeed. Like more than 50 other people, he was arrested by Israeli authorities in September 2019 for alleged complicity in terrorist acts that had taken place a month earlier. I strongly condemn that attack. At present, there is no evidence that his possible participation has anything to do with his employment with the UAWC. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also well acquainted with NGO Monitor's many years of allegations against a number of civil society organizations about terrorist links, including the UAWC. There is no credible information that UAWC supports or is involved in terrorist acts, but they have stated the opposite in the documentation we have obtained. Loose claims about such links have been rejected by credible actors, e.g. in surveys conducted by the Australian authorities on several occasions, where NGO Monitor is criticized for its methods.”

We have various points to make regarding this statement:

1. We note that you say you are aware of the accusations against Samer Arbid. However, you do not mention the accusations against Ubai Aboudi, or against Farraj. Were you not aware of these further accusations? Did UAWC not inform you that these top officials in their organisation had been arrested?
2. You say that there is no evidence that Arbid's participation had anything to do with his employment at UAWC. However the fact that three of UAWC's top officials are involved in this incident implies that they may well have discussed this "at the office".
3. We also have evidence as set out in the attached Report that UAWC is an official affiliate of the PFLP, and that the whole organisations is linked to the PFLP.
4. If, as part of its donations to UAWC, Norway pays for some of the overheads of the project, then it is highly likely that Norway is or was partially paying for the salaries of these officials of UAWC, even if they were not involved in day to day running of the particular projects that Norway sponsored.
5. The Netherlands, which is also a major funder of UAWC has now admitted that it was partially paying for salaries of these officers, as part of the payments for overheads that it made. It has now suspended payment to UAWC pending an investigation.
6. You say that "*There is no credible information that UAWC supports or is involved in terrorist acts, but they have stated the opposite in the documentation we have obtained*" However,
 - a. You are ignoring all the credible evidence that we have presented in this letter and in the attached Document on the links between UAWC and the PFLP
 - b. You are ignoring the fact that two UAWC employees are now on trial in connection with the murder and a third has been sentenced to 12 months for involvement with the PFLP, and that its chairman acts as a spokesman for the jailed PFLP leader.
 - c. Officers the very heart of the organisation not only support but apparently assist in carrying out terrorist acts.
 - d. The individual history of each of the four UAWC officers who appear in the Netherlands Facebook post above should have lit a warning light as the evidence showed that they were PFLP supporters.
 - e. There are also many other UAWC employees linked to the PLFP, as set out in the attached report.
 - f. The UAWC as an organisation is closely associated with the PFLP (see first section of attached report).

- g. The fact that the UAWC state in documents that they do not support terrorism is meaningless as “actions speak louder than words.” The UAWC would evidently say that they do not support terrorist groups if they were hoping to raise money from European donors such as Norway, and would seek to hide their terrorist connections.
7. Now that you are aware that three of UAWC’s employees have been arrested in connection with terrorism acts, and two of them are on trial for the terrorist attack on the Shnerb family, please confirm that you will terminate all payments to UAWC, if only as a precautionary measure. Even if two of the trials have not yet been concluded it is clear that Norway will be complicit in murder if it continues to fund the UAWC, given the clear evidence that the organisation and its officers are closely linked to the PFLP.

The 2012 Australian investigation

When NPA responded to our June 2019 letter, it sent us a copy of a 2012 AusAid report (The AusAid Report) which it still relies on to exonerate UAWC.

However, the AusAid Report is (evidently) out of date and further information about the UAWC has emerged since 2012 (as set out in our attached Report.) which sets out the strong links between UAWC and the PFLP.

Furthermore, information in the AusAid Report has been subsequently rebutted by the Israeli Government. In particular:

- a) The AusAid Report states at page 1 that “*the government of Israel does not consider UAWC to be a terrorist entity*”. However, a letter from Israel’s General Security Service (the Shin Bet) dated 28 March 2017 confirms that the “UAWC”, which was registered in the Gaza Strip, is a body which operates on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine”. See Annex A.
- b) A letter from the State of Israel Ministry of Justice Corporations Authority Enforcement and Supervision dated 4 April 2017 (the Letter) also confirmed that UAWC operated “*on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*” (see Annex B)
- c) The AusAid Report states that UAWC has had a Jerusalem based office since 1996. However, both letters at Annex A and Annex B confirm that UAWC was never registered in Israel – it was registered in Gaza at that time.
- d) Another entity, “the Committee of Agricultural Works” (CAW), had been registered in Jerusalem, but did not submit any documents at all relating to its activities. For this reason the registrar struck off CAW from the register of not for profit organisations on 25 January 2018.
- e) The UAWC were found to have fraudulently provided foreign donors (such as World Vision Australia, which acted on behalf of AusAid) with the Israeli

charity registration documents of another entity, **CAW**, falsely claiming them as its own in an effort to obtain government funding.

We are surprised that NPA continues to rely on an outdated report that has since been discredited, to justify continued donations to that organisation. The information that we have supplied in the attached Report relates to both current and past employees and officers of UAWC, many of whom joined the organisation after 2012. Over 8 years have elapsed since the AusAid report and it is apparent that UAWC continues to have strong links with the PFLP.

We understand that NPA was sent details about the rebuttals to the AusAid report by the International Legal Forum by letter dated 29 March 2018.

We have some further questions:

1. If employees of UAWC are or are suspected to be active members of terrorist organisations, does this mean that UAWC is in breach of the terms of your contribution agreements?
2. Does the money you donate to UAWC include a contribution towards the overheads of UAWC?
3. If so, were you paying towards the salaries of officers including Abdul Razaq Farraj, Samir Arbid and Abdul Razaq Farraj?
4. Will you now terminate payment of donations to UAWC in view of the actions of their officers?
5. Do you admit that the organisation of UAWC is closely linked to the PFLP, given the information as set out in the attached Document?
6. The Netherlands government announced on 20 July 2020 that they had suspended payments to UAWC pending an independent inquiry regarding its terrorist links. Will Norway take similar action?

We would also like to make the following Freedom of Information Requests:

1. Please provide copies of the contribution agreements that have been signed between Norway and UAWC since 2014.
2. How much money has been donated by the Norwegian Government to UAWC each year since 2014?
3. Please provide all correspondence between the Norwegian Government and NPA regarding UAWC for the period January 2018 to July 2020.
4. How much money is earmarked for donation to UAWC in the next five years?

We would be grateful if you would respond within the next 21 days.

Yours sincerely



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