

3 August 2020

To: Mr Luigi Di Maio, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr Luca Maestriperi, Director of Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Dear Minister Di Maio,

We write to you regarding evidence that we have uncovered, showing that Italian government NGO grantees are linked to a terrorist organization.

Similar concerns are being discussed intensively and urgently across Europe. For example, on July 20, the Dutch government announced it was freezing funding to the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) over its close links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), designated as a terrorist organization by the EU and others. Foreign Minister Stef Blok and Development Minister Sigrid Kaag revealed that an internal government audit concluded that Dutch funds were used to pay the salaries of two individuals arrested for murder.

Additionally on May 19, Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi stated during a meeting of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), that he had [instructed](#) the heads of EU delegations to Israel and West Bank/ Gaza to “look deeply” into the allegations that some EU funds go to terror-linked or supporting NGOs, declaring that such funding “will not be tolerated.”

In the Italian context, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) is providing €1.8 million ([€994,415](#) and [€847,701](#)) to projects involving UAWC.

Senior UAWC employees, including financial officers, were among those arrested for their roles in a 50-person terror cell that operated in the West Bank. Several are currently on trial for their direct involvement in an August 2019 bombing attack in which a 17-year-old Israeli was murdered.

- **Samer Arbid**, UAWC [accountant](#) and previously UAWC “[financial officer](#)” (formerly Addameer’s [accountant](#)). Arbid is on trial for [commanding the PFLP terror cell that carried out the bombing](#). According to the indictment (on file), Arbid prepared and detonated the explosive device.
- **Abdel Razeq Farraj**, UAWC “[Finance and Administration Director](#).” According to his indictment (on file), Razeq Farraj held a senior PFLP post and authorized the August 2019 bombing. He is currently standing trial.

We urge you to immediately freeze any funds that may be going to UAWC or other terror-linked NGOs, launch an investigation into previous grants to UAWC, and implement robust vetting mechanisms to ensure that terror-linked NGOs do not receive taxpayer funds.

Sincerely,

Prof Gerald M. Steinberg
President

Olga Deutsch
Vice President

CC: Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti

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