

July 11, 2020

To: Mr Guy Rayée, Belgium - Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

Dear Director Guy Rayée,

We write to you regarding evidence that we have uncovered, showing that Belgian government grantees are linked to a terrorist organization. Similar concerns have been discussed intensively across Europe over the last couple of months. For example, 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 deep” in to the allegations that some EU funds go to terror-linked or -supporting NGOs, declaring that such funding “will not be tolerated.”

In the Belgian context, since 2017, the Directorate-general Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) provided at least €1.2 million to projects involving at least three NGOs with reported ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), an [EU-designated](#) terror organization.

At least five senior employees, including the executive director and financial officers, of DGD grantees 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.

DGD is providing (2017-2021) Viva Salud, a Belgian NGO, with [€955,976](#) for programs that partner with the PFLP-linked NGOs [Health Work Committees](#) (HWC) and [Union of Health Work Committees](#), HWC’s “[sister](#)” in Gaza. UHWC is identified by Fatah as an official PFLP “[affiliate](#).” In addition, Viva Salud also identifies Bisan as its [partner](#) in the West Bank.

In addition, in 2014-2016, DGD provided Solidarité Socialiste (SolSoc) with [€1.1 million](#) for the project “Capacity building of youth for the creation of a social movement that supports equality, freedom, human rights and social, political and economic justice.” During the years of the grant, SolSoc listed Bisan as one of its partners.

**Walid Hanatsheh (Abu Ras):** [Health Work Committees](#) (HWC)’s [finance and administration manager](#). Hanatsheh is on trial for allegedly being the leader of PFLP “[military](#)” operations and commanding the PFLP terror cell that carried out the August 2019 bombing attack. According to the indictment against him, Hanatsheh [bankrolled the August bombing](#).

**Ubai Aboudi:** Bisan’s Executive Director since [April 2019](#). He was [arrested](#) by Israeli authorities on November 13, 2019. In an indictment of another recently indicted PFLP

leader, Aboudi is referred to a PFLP member who was told to recruit additional members to the cell. In June 2020, Aboudi was [sentenced](#) to 12-months in prison.

**Itiraf Hajaj (Rimawi)** served as Bisan's previous Executive Director<sup>1</sup> (from [2014](#) at least). He was [arrested](#) by Israeli forces in September 2019. The Israel Security Agency refers to Rimawi as being [responsible for PFLP clandestine operations](#).

In 2017-2018, according to Oxfam, DGD provided [€286,002](#) for a project that listed UAWC as the project "actor."

**Samer Arbid:** [Union of Agricultural Work Committees](#) (UAWC) 's [accountant](#) and previously its "[financial officer](#)." Arbid is on trial for [commanding a PFLP terror cell that carried out the August 2019 bombing attack](#). According to the indictment against him (on file), Arbid prepared and detonated the explosive device.

**Abdel Razeq Farraj:** UAWC's "[Finance and Administration Director](#)." According to his indictment (on file), Razeq Farraj held a senior PFLP post and authorized the August 2019 bombing.

Our research, publically available at [www.ngo-monitor.org](http://www.ngo-monitor.org), shows a direct connection between individuals employed by or serving on the board of these NGOs, and the PFLP terror organization.

We urge Belgium to take necessary measures and, like the EU, launch an investigation in order to prevent the abuse of development funds by those involved in or supporting terror organizations.

Sincerely,

Prof Gerald M. Steinberg

President

Cc: Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Defence, Philippe Goffin

Olga Deutsch

Vice President

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<sup>1</sup> SolSoc's [2014](#), [2015](#), [2016](#) annual reports