

July 25, 2022

Italy Condemns Israeli Designation of Terror-linked NGOs

Dear Minister Luigi Di Maio,

Last week, Italy published a brief statement rejecting Israel's designation of terror-tied organizations based on their affiliation to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The statement claimed that: "No substantial information was received from Israel that would justify reviewing our policy towards the six Palestinian NGOs on the basis of the Israeli decision to designate these NGOs as 'terrorist organizations.'"

However, we note that this and similar statements did not refer to the open source information, including data confirmed by an independent investigation in the Netherlands and in NGO Monitor reports. These show substantial ties between the designated NGOs and the PFLP, which is recognized by the EU as a terrorist organization.

- In January 2022, the Netherlands government, which signed the joint statement, [announced](#) that the investigation commissioned by its government determined that one of the designated NGOs, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), had **34 employees with ties to the PFLP in 2007-2020, some holding leadership positions in the terrorist group concurrent to their employment at UAWC**. In reporting to the parliament, the ministers added that "the large number of board members of UAWC with a dual mandate is particularly worrying".
- Detailed reports from NGO Monitor on the PFLP-linked NGO network can be found at: <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/pflp-ties-six-newly-designated-terror-ngos/>

As systematic and readily verifiable NGO Monitor research has demonstrated, the affiliations and statements of NGO officials and employees are critical to properly vetting potential partners. This research was shared with you repeatedly over the past two years.

In addition, we note that in May 2022, the European Parliament approved the 2020 discharge report, "[EU general budget – Commission and executive agencies](#)," which calls on the European Commission to "make sure that individuals or groups affiliated, linked to or supporting terrorist organisations are excluded from [European] Union funding."

Due diligence and accountability, based on evaluating all of the available evidence, are essential to ensure that state funding for civil society organizations is not diverted to terror affiliated activities .

On this basis, we would appreciate information regarding the evaluations, if any, made by the government of Italy regarding open source evidence of extensive links between these Palestinian organizations and the PFLP, in the context of grantmaking and vetting mechanisms.

Respectfully,

Professor Gerald Steinberg

President

Olga Deutsch

Vice President

CC: Director of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Mr. Luca Maestriperi
Ambassador Mr. Sergio Barbanti, Italy Ambassador to Israel