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NGO Monitor's mission is to provide information and analysis, promote accountability, and support discussion on the reports and activities of NGOs claiming to advance human rights and humanitarian agendas.

Introduction

In 2022, USAID provided funding to more than 20 Palestinian NGOs, via its [Civic Participation and Community Engagement \(CPCE\)](#) framework, intended to advance “basic democratic freedoms and common goals shared between the American and Palestinian people.”

The following report details how several board members and officials from CPCE partner organizations operating in the West Bank celebrate terrorists and glorify violence. Additionally, it highlights statements made by these officials and the NGOs themselves, advocating for BDS and anti-normalization, both in opposition to explicit US policies, interests and values.

Such problematic partnerships reinforce the need for improved vetting at USAID, to ensure that taxpayer funds are not provided to organizations that glorify violence, support terrorism, promote anti-normalization, and/or employ antisemitic rhetoric.

This report follows NGO Monitor’s June 2021 publication, “[USAID-funded Palestinian NGOs: Introducing Children to Convicted Terrorists](#).” Our findings revealed that, in several instances, USAID sub-grantees ran programs that introduced children to convicted terrorists, presented convicted terrorists as role models, and publicly demonstrated support for terrorists and terrorist organizations.

2022 USAID-CPCE Grantees

Community Development and Continuing Education Institute (CDCE-I)

In 2022, USAID, granted [\\$78,000](#) to CDCE-I for a project that “encourages youth participation and accountability in local governance through 13 Local Youth Councils and 11 Social Accountability Committees in 23 communities. These committees enable youth to take ownership of their communities and provide early opportunities to develop leadership skills and community participation.”

Staff

Multiple CDCE-I staff members regularly express support of terror and violence against Israel. They also advance BDS and anti-normalization.

Imad Al-Zeer - Chair of the Board

Imad Al-Zeer has held the role of Chair of CDCE-I's board¹ since at least [May 2012](#).

- In December 2019, according to the *Al-Hadaf* news outlet – affiliated with the US-designated terrorist organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – CDCE-I's Chair of the Board Imad Al-Zeer participated in the PFLP's Progressive Student Labor Front (PSLF) event, celebrating the [52nd anniversary of the founding of the terror group](#). PFLP insignia and posters were [present](#) at the event.



Al-Zeer (circled in red) participated in the PFLP's PSLF celebration of the PFLP's 52nd anniversary.

Source:

<https://hadfnews.ps/post/62927/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%>

¹ Al-Zeer held the role of CDCE-I Chair of the Board as of [June 2022](#).

Mike Salman - Deputy Chairman of the Board

Mike Salman has held the role of Deputy Chair of CDCE-I's board² at least since [May 2014](#).

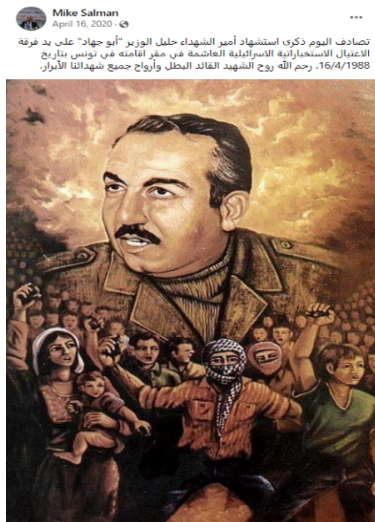
Glorification of terrorists

- In September 2021, CDCE-I Deputy Board Chair Salman [posted on Facebook](#), “What a good morning of strength, pride and bravery. There is a state of embarrassment at the occupation’s security circles over the escape of six of our free prisoner heroes who were held in Gilboa Prison...May Allah protect the prisoner fighters, the heroes who escaped, and keep them under his wide wings and provide them, by his divine means...security and safety. Salman [lauded](#) the six prisoners once more on September 7, 2021, referring to them as “heroes.”
 - The [six prisoners](#) were five PIJ members and a former senior commander in Fatah’s Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Zakaria Zubeidi. The latter was responsible for numerous acts of terrorism, including a June 2004 Tel Aviv bombing that killed an Israeli woman.
 - Another escapee was Eham Kamamji, [convicted for kidnapping and murdering an Israeli teen](#) – Eliyahu Asheri – in 2006.
- On September 27, 2021, Salman [posted on Facebook](#), “What a good morning of strength and pride. May Palestine have endurance, Allah’s promise shall come true...May Allah have mercy on the spirits of Palestinian’s hero martyrs, including the five martyrs that rose to the supreme companion yesterday. May there be the outmost shame on those supporting normalization and those languishing in doing what is necessary.”
 - On September 26, 2021, IDF forces [killed five Hamas terrorists](#) in raids in the West Bank aimed at preventing [major terror attacks](#) in Israel.
- On April 16, 2020, Salman [posted on Facebook](#), “Today is the anniversary of the martyrdom of the prince of martyrs, Khalil Al-Wazir, ‘Abu Jihad,’ by the hands of an oppressive Israeli intelligence assassination group...May Allah have mercy on the spirit of the hero commander and the spirits of all our righteous martyrs.”
 - [Al-Wazir](#) was the PLO’s cofounder who orchestrated major terror attacks, causing the killing and wounding of hundreds of Israelis,

² In [March 2021](#), Salman was reelected as CDCE-I Deputy Chair of the Board.

including a 1978 attack on an Israeli bus in which 38 Israeli civilians were murdered.

- On April 2, 2020, Salman [posted on Facebook](#), “Together, with one another, to support the release of George Abdallah. One of the idioms used by the hero fighter George is ‘I shall never compromise, I shall keep resisting...’”
- [Abdallah](#), a PFLP member, was sentenced to life in prison for the 1982 assassinations of US military attaché Lt.- Col. Charles R. Ray and Israeli diplomat Yaakov Bar Simantov.



Salman shared a poster of senior terrorist Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), and called him “the prince of martyrs” and a “hero commander.” (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/mike.salman.9/posts/pfbid0yCahdbu9pw3TuRLYtuma3s1dHFxDsEqiWFdJy7D7eLCuRRiakSejKFtU6EWUgEYhl>)

Anti-normalization

- On September 14, 2020, Salman [posted on Facebook](#), “Tomorrow is the black signing day between the United Arab Emirates state and the Kingdom of Bahrain with the so called State of Israel on two peace agreements...I am ready to go to the street to protest this foolish behavior, which fills the place with dust of foul-smelling poisonous treason.”
- On August 15, 2020, Salman [commented](#) on the Israeli-Emirati accord, “This is a stab in the back of the Palestinian people, of both its leadership and its people, by an Arab state which we thought was a friend and a supporter of our interests and our ambitions....Our legitimate rights and our righteous cause are in grave danger and a new challenge. It is not enough to confront them with grief, condemnation and a strong and sharp disapproval, it is necessary to resist this dark period of repulsive normalization with all available means

and decisively and collectively bring shame on it, locally, with Arab, with Muslims and internationally.”

Yasser Shaheen - Board Member

Yasser Shaheen has held a seat at CDCE-I's board³ at least since [December 2012](#).

Glorification of terrorists

- On May 10, 2021, following a Hamas rocket barrage on Jerusalem, CDCE-I Board Member Yasser Shaheen [wrote on Facebook](#), “The rockets of the Palestinian resistance have reaffirmed the battle of Jerusalem and its national compass. The occupation and the whole world got the message – fooling with Jerusalem shall light a great fire without a beginning or an end.”
- On March 20, 2019, Shaheen [wrote on Facebook](#), “The form and extent of the mad reaction about the situation of the hero martyr Omar Abu Layla reveals the depth of national alienation and systematic restraining that our parties, movements, governments and leadership have brought us to.” In another post, dated the same day, Shaheen [shared](#) Abu Layla’s picture, called him a hero and wished his spirit will have mercy.
 - On March 17, [Omar Abu Layla](#) fatally stabbed IDF Sgt. Gal Keidan, and shot and murdered Rabbi Achiad Ettinger.
- On December 20, 2015, Shaheen [wrote on Facebook](#), “What is achieved by the controversy over the martyrdom of the fighter Samir Al-Kuntar is shameful and disgraceful...This man was a fighter and a supporter [of the Palestinians]. May he have mercy...”
 - In 1979, [Al-Kuntar](#) and his accomplices infiltrated Israel from Lebanon, killed an Israeli police officer, and in an assault on an apartment complex, shot and drowned Danny Haran and brutally murdered Haran’s 4-year-old daughter. Haran’s 2-year-old daughter also died during the terrorist attack.

BDS activities

- On July 13, 2021, Shaheen [posted on Facebook](#), “there is a need to start a campaign to prevent Israeli products from entering Palestinian markets...forming a front that will include all the factions of the Palestinian

³ In [March 2021](#), Shaheen was reelected as a CDCE-I board member.

people for popular resistance...including Fatah, Hamas, independent lists, movements, youth bodies and all the civil society institutions.”

- On May 17, 2021, Shaheen [wrote on Facebook](#), “Boycotting Israeli products is a moral and national duty.” Shaheen shared posters reading “boycott your occupation” and “boycott your enemy.”
- On February 1, 2020, Shaheen [posted on Facebook](#), “The smallest thing one can do to reject the deal of the century and punish the occupation is to boycott all Israeli products which fill our markets and makes us lose millions of dollars...The Palestinian lands have a market with a profit of more than 4 billion dollars a year for the occupation, some of which has created the settlements.”
- On June 24, 2019, Shaheen [wrote on Facebook](#), “I swear by the great Allah that I will commit myself to boycotting any Israeli product...The time has come that we learn what can be done to damage the occupation and its interests. Boycott Israeli products and get rid of all kinds of juice, milk, emek [cheese] and all other types. In this way alone we will bring down the deal of the century and damage its [Israel’s] economy.”
- On June 7, 2018, Shaheen [wrote on Facebook](#), “Great respect and evaluation to the singer Shakira and all the free artists who joined the campaign to boycott Israel. #BDS.”

Anti-normalization

- On August 20 and August 25, 2020, Shaheen expressed his appreciation towards the governments of [Morocco](#) and [Algeria](#) for “its positions...regarding the normalization and treason and support of the Palestinian issue.” Shaheen posted the official statements of these governments, in which they rejected the Abraham Accords signed between Israel and the UAE.
- On August 14, 2020, Shaheen [wrote on Facebook](#), “Normalization between Israel and the Emirates?!!!... Normalization is treason.”

Jiries Abu Ghannam - Board Member

In [March 2021](#), Jiries Abu Ghannam was elected to CDCE-I’s board.

Support for terrorists

- On March 6, 2017, CDCE-I Board Member Jiries Abu Ghannam [wrote on Facebook](#), “What a brotherly desire, oh friends, call for death as if it was a friend. #Basel Al-Araj.”

- On March 6, 2017, [Al-Araj](#) was killed by Israeli forces after opening fire on them. Al-Araj was previously arrested by the PA in April 2016 “for planning attacks against Israelis and imprisoned for six months.” According to Israeli officials, he “was allegedly part of a terrorist cell planning to carry out attacks on Israeli targets,” and “directed the cell and was responsible for purchasing the weaponry.”
- On April 13, 2020, Abu Ghannam [wrote on Facebook](#), “In solidarity with the prisoner fighter Marwan Al-Barghouti in his 19th year in Israeli prison.”
 - [Barghouti was convicted in 2004](#) for his leading role in a string of terror attacks on Israeli civilians, resulting in at least five deaths. He was sentenced to five life sentences and an additional 40 years in prison.

Rana Abu Farha - Board Member

In [March 2021](#), Rana Abu Farha was elected to CDCE-I’s board.

Glorification of terrorists



Rana Abu Farha shared a picture of the terrorist Dalal Al-Mughrabi and hailed her. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/rana.farha/posts/10158132651232016>)

- On March 11, 2022, [Abu Farha](#) shared a picture of Dalal Al-Mughrabi and [wrote on Facebook](#), “Today is the 44th anniversary of Dalal Al-Mughrabi and 11 Palestinian revolutionaries’ martyrdom. Al-Mughrabi, the beautiful and brave fighter, was born in Shatila [refugee] camp – Lebanon in 1958...She joined the revolutionary fighters of the Fatah movement and was a fighter until she was martyred in March 1978.”

- Abu Farha [published the same post](#) on the 43rd anniversary of Al-Mughrabi's death.
 - [Al-Mughrabi](#) was the leader of a terror cell that hijacked an Israeli bus in March 1978, firing at passengers inside and at nearby motorists. 38 Israelis, including 13 children, were murdered in what is known as the "Coastal Road Massacre."
- On February 3, 2022, Abu Farha [shared](#) a picture of [PFLP General Committee member](#) Yousef Shomali and mourned his death, calling him "the great comrade fighter."



Abu Farha hailed the terrorists who escaped Gilboa Prison and called them "heroes."
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/rona.farha/posts/10157862909557016>

- On September 11, 2021, Abu Farha [shared](#) the photos of four of the six prisoners who escaped Gilboa Prison and wrote, "It shall be remembered and retold, oh heroes. It is not only the honor of the [escape] attempt, but the details of the operation with every piece of dirt and every drop of sweat...there is not one picture or story that is able to shake one hair off the head of our heroes after this day. There is not one story that can diminish the value of digging the tunnel and breaching the cruelest security apparatus in the world..."

CDCE-I promotion of BDS

- In January 2021, CDCE-I [participated in a training session](#) with YWCA on "the topics of Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) Campaign, with its local and international aspects, and advocacy mechanisms and campaigns' management."
- On June 13, 2020, CDCE-I [posted on Facebook](#), "The occupation strives to destroy the watermelon season by flooding the market with the occupation's

produce, but we shall support the farmers in the [Jordan] Valley by direct purchasing [from them] and boycotting the occupation...together in supporting the Palestinian farmer and boycotting the occupation's watermelon.”

The Palestinian Charity for Youth Economic Empowerment (CYEE)

In 2022, USAID granted CYEE [\\$76,000](#) to support “60 emerging female leaders who address what they identify as the significant absence of young, female representation in their communities.”

Support for terrorism and glorification of terrorists

- On July 8, 2022, [CYEE Project Coordinator](#) Haneen Al-Qawasmi⁴ shared a Facebook [post](#) hailing former PFLP spokesman and Central Committee member Ghassan Kanafani. Al-Qawasmi wrote, “...between [his] birth and martyrdom there was a revolutionary for 36 years, who did not fire even a single bullet!”



Left: CYEE Project Coordinator Al-Qawasmi (circled in red on the left) and CYEE Project Assistant Raneem Fuqha (circled in red on the right) participating in USAID’s Positive Youth Engagement project. Right: Al-Qawasmi (right) and Fuqha (left) participating in the project’s activities. (Sources: <https://www.facebook.com/CYEEPage/posts/pfbid0bSZGLtv34i6VvF2DEmVBct5Ng1JNPU3RjYAb5ekwVdCASEXjxhRWosDSHXGmTlXl>; <https://www.facebook.com/CYEEPage/posts/pfbid02HbnoPuHL218AzuiDw5yiB3L3ligkm7VQjVe4fSy5XYts1h4KGbnhB1spi3b5yd4!>; <https://express.adobe.com/page/znS4h70PN72e0/>)

- On May 25, 2022, Al-Qawasmi shared the [will of Ghraith Yamin](#), who [participated](#) in [violent clashes](#) during which Palestinians hurled [stones and Molotov cocktails](#) at Jewish worshipers and [IDF forces](#) at Joseph’s Tomb.

⁴ Al-Qawasmi has been CYEE project coordinator since [November 2020](#), and as of [January 2023](#).

- On April 14, 2022, [CYEE Executive Director Sahar Othman](#)⁵ shared on Facebook a collage of [pictures of Palestinian terrorists](#) killed by Israeli security forces. This included photos of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) members [Ahmed Nasser Al-Saadi](#), [Saif Abu Libdeh](#), [Jamil Al-Amouri](#), and [Abdallah Al-Husary](#), all of whom were killed in firefights with IDF forces, attempting to apprehend Palestinian terrorists in the West Bank. Othman wrote, “May Allah have mercy upon you and bring fortitude to your families.” On September 26, 2021, then CYEE [board member](#) Ameera [Abu Arquoub](#)⁶ [wrote on Facebook](#), “It is so heavy on our hearts this morning, an entire encyclopedia won’t be enough and not any words. Four flowers gave their scented blood for the soil of this nation. This day is worthy of nothing but grief and silence. Nothing shall be heard today except for the cries of the martyrs’ mothers. Go in peace, oh great fragrance.”
 - On September 26, 2021, [initial reports revealed that four \(ultimately five\)](#) terrorists, affiliated with Hamas and PIJ, were killed in gun battles with Israeli forces.
- On May 12, 2021, during Israel’s military operation against terrorist organization in Gaza, Bader Al-Hudhud, an [instructor](#)⁷ in several CYEE workshops in 2017-2020, [wrote on Facebook](#), “Oh Allah, in the last hours of your distinguished month [a religious term for the month of Ramadan] we call you to deliver victory to the Jihad fighters...”
- On October 15, 2015, Al-Hudhud [wrote on Facebook](#), “They [youths] followed the events of the Second Intifada and were influenced by the personalities of the resistance fighters and their activities...this is the foundation to build the Palestinian generation who will liberate and revolt against its reality.”

BDS activities

- On May 23, 2021, Al-Qawasmi [shared a video](#) that called on Palestinians to “boycott your enemy” and “boycott Israeli products,” as well as stating that “boycott is resistance.” Al-Qawasmi wrote, “boycotting Israeli products and merchandise is an inseparable part of the resistance, whether it is on social media sites or by being present on the battle field...”

⁵ According to Othman’s LinkedIn account, since January 2014 and as of February 2023, Othman has held the role of [CYEE executive director](#).

⁶ According to [Arquoub’s LinkedIn account](#), Arquoub joined CYEE’s board of directors in August 2019. According to CYEE, as of [June 2022](#), Arquoub was no longer a member of its board.

⁷ According to [CYEE](#), in [2017-2020](#), as part of his role as “[master trainer](#)” in the [Passport to Success](#) (PTS) program, Bader Al-Hudhud was an instructor in several CYEE workshops. [Al-Hudhud](#) has also held the position of [programs director at US-funded Partners for Sustainable Development](#) (PSD) since 2009.

- On January 26, 2019, [CYEE Project Assistant](#)⁸ Raneem Fuqha [wrote on Facebook](#), “I, Raneem Fuqha, reject the presence of a delegate for the country ((Israel)) in the Model United Nations (MUN) program, since its participation means a legitimization of its presence as a normal entity that has the right to defend its crimes against the Palestinians. Therefore, I conclusively reject the presence and representation of Israel on our programs. I refuse to give up on my Palestinian country and admit that Jerusalem is a capital for the country of ((Israel)).”

Extreme rhetoric and anti-normalization



Al-Hudhud shared a poster of the word Palestine over a map of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, covered in a Kufiyah and wrote, “The strike today is not just to show solidarity, but it is the true referendum on the demarcation of Palestine’s borders, all of Palestine, from the river to the sea.” ([Source](#))

- On January 15, 2022, [CYEE Board Member](#) as of November 2019, Dana Hirbawi [shared on Facebook](#) a series of infographics accusing the “Israel settler colony” of “ethnically cleansing” the Negev.
- On July 30, 2021, Al-Hudhud [criticized](#) a Saudi judoka who competed against an Israeli at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Al-Hudhud [wrote on Facebook](#), “Worthless normalizers and they are also weak!!!”
- On May 18, 2021, during Israel’s military operation against Gaza-based terrorist organization, [Al-Hudhud wrote on Facebook](#), “The strike today is not just to show solidarity, but it is the true referendum on the demarcation of Palestine’s borders, all of Palestine, from the river to the sea. It is the referendum on overturning all the agreements with the occupation so that we can declare a new history of our state’s establishment. #GazaUnderAttack

⁸ From [March 2022](#) and as of [January 2023](#), Fuqha held the role of project assistant.

#GenocideinGaza...” Al-Hudhud shared a poster of the word Palestine over a map of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, covered in a Kufiyah.

Holy Land Trust

Holy Land Trust conducts highly politicized tours of Israel and the West Bank, promoting the Palestinian narrative and targeting church leaders and the international community, and [claiming](#) to provide “cross cultural and experimental learning opportunities in both Palestine and Israel.”

In 2022, USAID granted [\\$41,000](#) to Holy Land Trust to take “steps to address the inequities that lead to GBV [gender-based violence] by training 30 women from marginalized communities.”

PFLP links and support for terror-linked individual

- In February 2022, Holy Land Trust Executive Director [Elias D'eis](#)⁹ [was part of a delegation](#) from the Israeli-designated terrorist organization, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) to the Maan news agency. In 2017, [D'eis headed the DFLP's local elections list](#) in Beit Sahour.
- In July 2021, Holy Land Trust promoted the “[campaign to free Khalida Jarrar](#),” who was convicted and [sentenced to two years in prison](#) based on “her own confession, of the offense of holding office in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.”

“Apartheid” rhetoric

- In July 2021, D'eis participated in a webinar to discuss how the “[Israeli apartheid wall consumes and divides Palestine](#).”
- In May 2021, Holy Land Trust called on governments to “[condemn Israel's ongoing ethnic cleansing and apartheid in Palestine](#).”
- In June 2017, Holy Land Trust signed an [open letter](#) that calls to “recognize Israel as an apartheid state... unequivocally condemn the Balfour declaration as unjust,” and “demand from the UK that it asks forgiveness from the Palestinian people and compensates for the losses.” The letter also defends “our right and duty to resist the occupation creatively and nonviolently,”

⁹ According to his [Facebook account](#), D'eis has held the role of Holy Land Trust Executive Director since July 2019, and as of February 2023.

through “economic measures that pressure Israel to stop the occupation...in response to Israel’s war on BDS. We ask that you intensity those measures.”

BDS activities

- In October 2020, Holy Land Trust President of the Board Jonathan Kuttab was a signatory on a [letter to Congress](#) calling for the U.S. to “stop funding Israel’s military, which regularly engages in violations of human rights and international law without accountability.”
- In November 2019, Holy Land Trust [signed a letter to Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau](#) calling for the Canadian government to “implement an arms embargo, and press for a comprehensive arms embargo at the level of the UN Security Council” and “impose a ban on all goods originating from illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory entering Canada as well as a ban on Canadian companies operating in illegal settlements or trading in settlement goods.”