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Subject: PA vows to continue paying salaries to prisoners - among them terrorists



Bulletin
April 24, 2013

PA vows to continue paying salaries to prisoners - among them terrorists

**PA Deputy Minister:
"Salaries and allowances to Palestinian prisoners
will not be stopped, whatever the cost may be.
The prisoners are our joy."**

**Head of Prisoners' Club:
"When salaries are paid to those working
in government offices and institutions,
they will also be paid to the prisoners."**

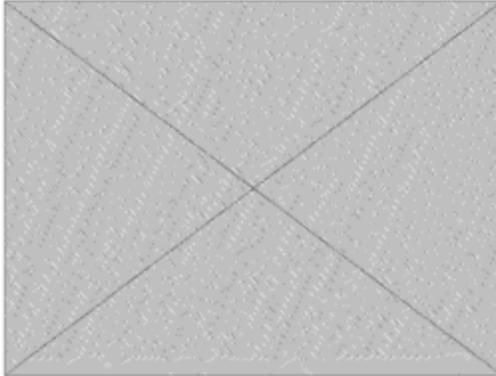
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by Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik

In recent months, both PA Deputy Minister of Prisoners' Affairs and the head of the Prisoners' Club have reiterated that prisoners' salaries are high priority for the PA and are treated and paid like all salaries to PA civil servants.

[Palestinian Media Watch's](#) reports on the [PA's payment of salaries](#) to prisoners, among them terrorists, have generated debates in both [Norway](#) and the [UK](#). The PA Deputy Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Ziyad Abu Ein responded to the possibility of losing donor funding due to PMW reports exposing these payments. He stressed that "the prisoners are our joy":

"If the assistance and the financial support to the PA are stopped, the [payment] of salaries (*rawatib*) and allowances (*mukhassasat*) to Palestinian prisoners will not be stopped, whatever the cost may be. The prisoners are our joy. We will sacrifice everything for them and continue to provide for their families."



Qadura Fares, Head of the Prisoners' Club, made a similar promise to continue salary payments. He also emphasized that the prisoners have the same status as PA civil servants:

PA TV host: "How were the prisoners' salaries and allowances affected by the economic crisis in Palestine?"

Chairman of the Prisoners' Club, Qadura Fares: "All in all, we are in the same situation as others. What is spent on the prisoners is exactly what is spent on me and you. These are salaries (*rawatib*). Therefore, when the salaries are paid to those working in government offices and institutions, they will also be paid to the prisoners."

[PA TV (Fatah), Jan. 17, 2013]

Recently, PMW reported on the [PA's glorification of one such prisoner](#) who should be receiving a salary from the PA: Issa Abd Rabbo, who murdered two Israeli students who were hiking near Jerusalem.

Commenting on the debates generated by PMW reports in Norway and the UK, the PA Deputy Minister accused Israel of inciting against the PA. "This is a kind of incitement... an attempt to inflame world opinion against the Palestinians,' he said, complaining that European countries are debating their aid to the PA:

"Israel supports and finances comprehensive activity in Europe; to be precise, in England, Norway and Belgium, for stopping the financial support and assistance to the PA and for fighting against the issue of the prisoners, who [Israel] describes as terrorists and suicide [bombers]."

However, the PA does not seem to have cause for concern. On Feb. 23, 2013, when Norwegian support to the PA general budget had already become an [issue in the Norwegian Parliament](#) due to Norwegian [NRK TV's](#)

report on PMW findings, Norwegian Foreign Minister Eide urged donor countries to to increase their aid to the PA, the official PA daily reported:

"[Norwegian Foreign Minister Eide] said that the current financial distress requires all parties involved to grant more funds in 2013, and called on all donors to hurry and transfer aid to the Palestinian budget as soon as possible."

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Feb. 24, 2013]

A few days earlier, the Norwegian Foreign Minister had decided to transfer all its aid to the PA for 2013 immediately in one payment:

"Norway is disbursing the whole amount of its budget support [of 240 million kroner (approx. \$41,825,760)] to Palestine for 2013 now because Palestinian public sector employees urgently need to be paid again."

[Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, www.regjeringen.no, Feb. 21, 2013]

In a press release following a meeting of the AHLC group of donor countries a few weeks later, Norwegian Foreign Minister Eide announced that the PA will receive more funding this year than it did last year:

"Overall budget support [to the PA] for this year will increase substantially, and it looks as if the contributions will be sufficient to cover the budget deficit of USD 1.2 billion. This is a significant improvement on 2012."

[Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, www.regjeringen.no, March 19, 2013]

However, the Norwegian Foreign Minister also stated that the AHLC donor group would have to reconsider its continued support if no progress is made in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

"Efforts to solve Palestine's acute economic problems are essential, but will only be meaningful within the framework of a negotiated two-state solution. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee has contributed to the development of effective Palestinian institutions, but we will have to seriously consider whether we can continue our efforts if the parties fail to take steps to promote political progress towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian state."

[Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, www.regjeringen.no, March 19, 2013]

In his interview, PA Deputy Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Abu Ein also acknowledged that "the European governments turned to them (the PA) about this issue (of salary payments to prisoners)," and that "the [PA]

Ministry [of Prisoners' Affairs] explained its official position and opinion, that these funds are transferred to the prisoners' families, from whom the occupation has taken their head and provider and who are considered to be in need of welfare assistance." Abu Ein also "noted that there is an understanding of the issue."

Norway and Britain have [requested more information](#) about the support program for prisoners, and are currently [awaiting the PA's answer](#).

Click to see [PMW's four reports on the PA's payments of salaries to terrorists](#).

To review how the story has been developing in Norway:

Click to see the [debate in Norway generated by PMW's findings](#), the responses of [Norwegian MPs](#), and [the Parliamentary Committee investigation](#) questioning why the Foreign Ministry did not give the correct information to parliament earlier.

Click to see how the Parliamentary Committee expressed [dissatisfaction with the Foreign Minister's first answer](#), and how the Foreign Minister in his second letter [admitted that the PA has special support program for prisoners, including terrorists, in Israel](#).

Click to see the Parliamentary Committee's request to receive further information about [what other investigations the Foreign Ministry performed](#) pertaining to the issue and how the Foreign Minister's answer to that request prompted [the Committee to consider a Parliamentary hearing](#).

Click to see the [UK Parliament debate](#) of PMW's findings about PA hate incitement and UK's funding of the PA.

The following is the interview with PA Deputy Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, Ziyad Abu Ein:

Headline: "Israel is fighting against the prisoners' issue."

By Omar Abu Arqoub

"Deputy Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, Ziyad Abu Ein told Hona Al-Quds (internet news site): 'If the assistance and the financial support to the PA are stopped, the [payment] of salaries (*rawatib*) and allowances (*mukhassasat*) to Palestinian prisoners will not be stopped, whatever the cost may be. The prisoners are our joy. We will sacrifice everything for them and continue to provide for their families.'

Abu Ein added: 'Israel supports and finances comprehensive activity in Europe; to be precise, in England, Norway and Belgium, for stopping the financial support and assistance to the PA and for fighting against the issue of the prisoners, who [Israel] describes as terrorists and suicide

[bombers]. This is a kind of incitement and even more so, it is an attempt to inflame world opinion against the Palestinians.'

Abu Ein said that the European governments turned to them about this issue. He added that the Ministry [of Prisoners' Affairs] explained its official position and opinion, that these funds are transferred to the prisoners' families, from whom the occupation has taken their head and provider and who are considered to be in need of welfare assistance.

He noted that there is an understanding of the issue."

[Hona Al-Quds site, April 8, 2013]

The following is the article in the official PA daily reporting on Norwegian Foreign Minister Eide's statements, urging donors to increase their aid to the PA:

Headline: "Norway extends emergency aid to the PA"

"The Norwegian government decided yesterday [Feb. 23, 2013] to rush and send emergency aid to the PA to pay salaries to the employees in the public sector. This is within the framework of aid granted to finance the important services that the Palestinian people needs in the education-, medical care- and security-sectors.

Norwegian Foreign Minister, Espen Barth Eide said that Palestine cannot continue to rely on those donors forever. He noted that the stability of the Palestinian economy will not be ensured in the absence of progress in the political negotiations, in a way that will make the end of the Israeli occupation possible and enable the Palestinians to control their resources again. He said that the current financial distress requires all parties involved to grant more funds in 2013, and called on all donors to hurry and transfer aid to the Palestinian budget as soon as possible.

Barth Eide said that Norwegian aid to the Palestinian budget, which comes to US \$ 43 million, will be transferred through the World Bank, to help build the public institutions of the State of Palestine."

[Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Feb. 24, 2013]

PA TV interviews Chairman of the Prisoners' Club Qadura Fares who confirms that prisoners receive salaries like civil servants:

PA TV host: "How were the prisoners' salaries and allowances affected by the economic crisis in Palestine?"

Chairman of the Prisoners' Club, Qadura Fares: "All in all, we are in the same situation as others. What is spent on the prisoners is exactly what is spent on me and you. These are salaries. Therefore, when the salaries are paid to those working in government offices and institutions, they will also be paid to the prisoners."

[PA TV (Fatah), Jan. 17, 2013]

Official PA daily reports on a meeting in the donor group the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee headed by the Norwegian Foreign Minister

in March 2013 in Brussels:

"Yesterday [March 19, 2013], Prime Minister Fayyad welcomed the results of the meeting in Brussels with the donors whose commitments will allow the fulfillment of the needs of the PA, which are estimated at \$1,2 billion for 2013. Fayyad said that the meeting of the [Ad Hoc] Liaison Committee (i.e., international group of donors), which has been established for this purpose, had been satisfactory.

Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide who heads the [Ad Hoc Liaison] Committee: 'We have obtained more contributions.

Therefore it looks as if we will be able to cover the deficit and this is good news.' According to the organizers, Saudi Arabia will particularly contribute a portion of these funds.

The High Representative of [the Union for] Foreign Affairs [and Security Policies] of the EU, Catherine Ashton, explained that the 27 countries 'will keep the same level of aid this year,' of 300 million Euros as in 2012. She also announced [the donation of] additional aid in the amount of 7 million Euros 'for dealing with the worsening of the financial crisis, which has befallen the PA.'"

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, March 20, 2013]

The following is the Norwegian Foreign Ministry's press release following the meeting of the AHLC on March 19, 2013:

Headline: "Palestinian state on hold"

"After 20 years of support from donor countries like Norway, Palestinian institutions are now strong enough to serve as a basis for an independent Palestinian state. At today's meeting, the donors agreed to increase their contributions. But without a credible political process towards a two-state solution, it will become increasingly difficult for the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) to continue as before,' said Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide.

Mr Eide chaired the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) for assistance to the Palestinians in Brussels today. The meeting was hosted by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton. The Palestinian delegation was led by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

Two years after the donors concluded that the Palestinians have the necessary institutions in place to form a Palestinian state, the situation is serious. Financial problems in Palestine are threatening to undermine Palestinian government institutions and the peace process is at a standstill.

'The meeting demonstrated that the international community remains united on the issue of the development of a Palestinian state. There was

broad agreement on the political assessments and understanding of the challenges ahead. Overall budget support for this year will increase substantially, and it looks as if the contributions will be sufficient to cover the budget deficit of USD 1.2 billion. This is a significant improvement on 2012,' Mr Eide said.

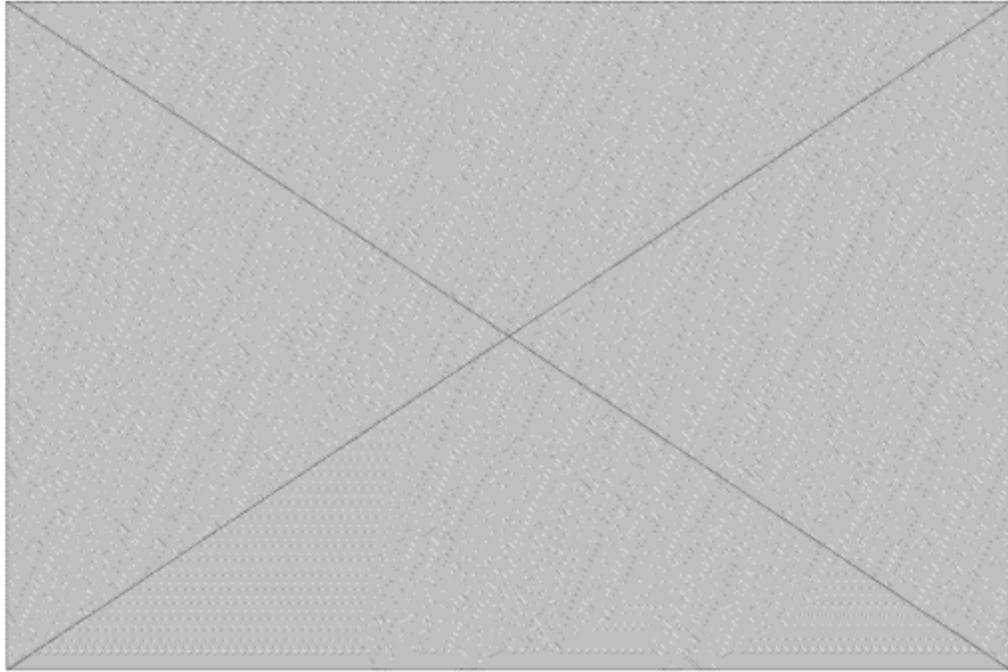
At the same time the donors agreed that aid cannot solve the economic problems Palestine is experiencing. The financial crisis is the result of a combination of the effects of the occupation, irregular transfers from Israel of Palestinian customs and tax revenues and weaker growth in the Palestinian economy.

'The donors have indicated that they will provide support to cover this year's budget deficit, but sustainable growth in the economy will only be possible if Israel lifts the restrictions it has imposed on Palestinian exports and on the freedom of movement of Palestinians. The Israeli occupation is weakening the framework conditions for the private sector and its competitiveness,' said Mr Eide.

'The Palestinians for their part must continue efforts to build an open, modern and effective state,' Mr Eide said.

'Efforts to solve Palestine's acute economic problems are essential, but will only be meaningful within the framework of a negotiated two-state solution. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee has contributed to the development of effective Palestinian institutions, but we will have to seriously consider whether we can continue our efforts if the parties fail to take steps to promote political progress towards the establishment of an independent Palestinian state,' Mr Eide said.

[Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, www.regjeringen.no ,
March 19, 2013]



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