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Subject: Norwegian MP says government "indirectly" funds terrorism

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Bulletin
March 6, 2013

Norwegian MP says government "indirectly" funds terrorism

MP calls on Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs to investigate if former Foreign Minister "wrongly" informed Parliament about PA salary payments to terrorist prisoners

After NRK TV publicized PMW's findings, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry agreed to again check into the question of PA payments of salaries to terrorists in prison

http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=8630

by Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik

Norwegian state-owned NRK TV launched an inquiry into Norway's support of the PA's general budget. The PA uses this budget to pay salaries of all Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails for security offenses. [Palestinian Media Watch](#) has reported that the recipients of the monthly salary include all imprisoned terrorists including those serving multiple life sentences for murder. NRK's publication of PMW's findings has led to complaints by Norwegian MPs that their government is indirectly funding terror and has "wrongly" informed parliament.

MP Peter Gitmark to NRK TV:

"This is very serious and especially the fact that it almost seems to be an aid program to terror-convicted prisoners in Israel, not to mention that it increases according to the length of the sentence."

...

NRK TV newsreader: "Do you think that Norwegian tax money is being used to fund terrorism?"



MP Peter Gitmark: "Yes, this is an indirect form of that."

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In past parliamentary debates about these salaries to terrorists, Norway's former Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre defended funding the PA budget, stating that the PA payments were social welfare to the families and not salaries. PMW has published extensive [documentation](#) that the payments are in fact "salaries" controlled by the prisoners. PMW has shown that even though the terrorists cannot personally receive the money in jail, it belongs to them and they have the sole right to appoint a power of attorney to receive the money on their behalf. In some cases, wives and families of prisoners do not receive the money. PMW has also noted that more than 60% of the jailed terrorists are single. Nevertheless, they receive the salary payments.

MP Peter Gitmark: "Parliament has been informed on several occasions by then Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. It now appears that former Foreign Minister Støre, was wrong and informed Parliament wrongly. Naturally the [Parliamentary] Scrutiny Committee (Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs) should examine this and check if this should have consequences in Parliament because of the bad information."

Following the recent debates, the Foreign Ministry told NRK TV that it will again turn to the PA for clarification:

State Secretary Larsen: "After new questions have been asked, new claims have been made, we find it necessary, together with Great Britain, once more, to ask for clarifications from the PA regarding aid levels, amounts and determination of need related to this type of social aid."

Larsen's insistence on referring to the salary payments as "social aid" is striking, as PMW has already reported that the PA Minister of Prisoners himself recently rejected this categorization of the payments as social welfare. Rather, they are out of "esteem" for the "struggle" of the prisoners:

"[Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa] Karake denies rumors about changing salaries (Arabic: *rawatib*) into social assistance (Arabic: *i'anat ijtima'iya*)... He noted that the government headed by Salam Fayyad considers the prisoners' cause central, and has authorized regulations to support and protect them out of esteem for their sacrifice and struggle."

[Wafa (the official Palestinian Authority news agency), Dec. 27, 2012]

Larsen's mention of Britain is a reference to the fact that in response to PMW's reports, Britain has likewise been debating the UK's funding of the general PA budget, which pays the salaries payments to the terrorists.

Click to view PMW's [latest bulletin](#) on PA salaries to terrorists in Israeli prisons.

Click to view PMW's [four in depth reports](#) documenting the PA's payment of salaries to terrorists.

The following is the transcript of the Norwegian NRK TV News' report on PMW's documentation of the PA's payment of salaries to terrorists in

prison:

NRK TV newsreader: "Convicted Palestinian terrorists in Israeli prisons receive salaries from their government, an Israeli organization [PMW] claims. Norway provides substantial financial aid to the PA and the Foreign Ministry confirms that there is a financial aid program for prisoners, including terrorists. But the Foreign Ministry calls it social aid for the families and will now ask for clarification on how the [Norwegian] money is spent."

Footage of scene of bombing at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem is shown.

NRK TV narrator: "A bomb was placed in the cafeteria at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Nine civilians were killed that day in July 2002. The man behind [the attack] was Ibrahim Hamed, convicted of the murder of a total of 46 Israelis. Ibrahim Hamed is one of the approximately 4,600 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, who, according to the Israeli organization Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), receive salaries from the PA while they are in prison."

PMW Director Itamar Marcus: "Every Palestinian prisoner in an Israeli jail who is there for security offenses, who is there for - that includes any terrorist offense, including murder, receives a monthly salary from the Palestinian Authority. This includes people who've murdered 50-60 people in suicide bombings that they organized."

NRK TV narrator: "Since 2008, Norway has given over 300 million [Norwegian] kroner annually in direct budget support to the PA in the West Bank."

Visual of PMW's special report on the PA's payment of salaries to terrorists: "Is the PA lying to European governments in order to receive European funding?"

NRK TV narrator: "This is the same PA that according to PMW's last report, gives salaries to Palestinian prisoners, among them several hundred inmates convicted of terror-related actions. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry several times has rejected such complaints. Last year in Parliament, [then Foreign Minister] Jonas Gahr Støre said that 'this is not salaries, it is support for the prisoners' families and canteen money for the prisoners.' The Norwegian Foreign Ministry gave the same answer to NRK TV two weeks ago. But NRK was not satisfied with this answer. We asked for supplementary information from the Foreign Ministry, which we have now received. The Foreign Ministry now says that a separate aid program for Palestinian prisoners who are convicted in Israeli military court does exist."

Norwegian Foreign Ministry State Secretary Torgeir Larsen: "First of all, I would like to say that rewarding terror is not acceptable. Social aid is given, we have been informed by the PA, to different categories of Palestinian prisoners. One of those categories is those 5000 Palestinians who are imprisoned after conviction in military court in Israel."

NRK TV reporter: "Among them terrorists?"

State Secretary Larsen: "It's everything from stone throwing youths to Hamas MPs to long term prisoners who are imprisoned for serious terror

attacks."

NRK TV reporter: "The Foreign Ministry also confirms that the salary amounts increase with the length of the sentence and says that the initial salary per month is 2,300 [Norwegian] kroner. Those who have been imprisoned for more than 30 years can receive as much as 18,000 kroner per month according to Palestinian Media [Watch]. This is an amount that, as NRK TV understands, no other type of prisoners receive. After NRK's inquiry, the Foreign Ministry will bring up the issue once more."

State Secretary Larsen: "After new questions have been asked, new claims have been made, we find it necessary, together with Great Britain, once more, to ask for clarifications from the PA regarding aid levels, amounts and determination of need related to this type of social aid."

NRK TV reporter: "The Foreign Ministry thinks it is important to add that the founder of PMW, Itamar Marcus, lives in an illegal settlement in the West Bank, and that the organization is on the right in Israeli politics."

NRK has given the PA the opportunity to answer regarding this issue. The [PA] Ambassador to Norway [Yasser Al-Najjar] does not want to be interviewed, but says in an e-mail that the money going to prisoners is for supporting the family of the prisoners who are unable to provide for the family while in prison."

NRK TV newsreader: "[MP] Peter Gitmark (Conservative Party), how seriously do you view this?"

MP Peter Gitmark: "This is very serious and especially the fact that it almost seems to be an aid program to terror-convicted prisoners in Israel, not to mention that it increases according to the length of the sentence."

NRK TV newsreader: "But is it not fair that people receive support to provide for the family if its breadwinner is imprisoned?"

MP Peter Gitmark: "Yes, absolutely, and canteen money and also simple payments to the family is okay, but having large amounts like 18,000 [Norwegian] kroner a month [paid], whether it is for the family or the individual prisoner, because he has committed a terrorist act, is unacceptable."

NRK TV newsreader: "Do you think that Norwegian tax money is being used to fund terrorism?"

MP Peter Gitmark: "Yes, this is an indirect form of that. However, it is also important to emphasize that the Norwegian support to the Palestinian areas is vital in order to create an opportunity to reach a two-state solution, and that is what is needed for peace."

NRK TV newsreader: "So you will not stop your support [to the PA]? A quick yes or no?"

MP Peter Gitmark: "No."

NRK TV newsreader: "How well do you think Parliament is informed by the government here?"

MP Peter Gitmark: "Far too badly. Parliament has been informed on several occasions by then Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. It now appears that former Foreign Minister Støre, was wrong and informed Parliament wrongly. Naturally the [Parliamentary] Scrutiny Committee (Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs) should examine this and check if this should have consequences in Parliament because of the bad information."

[NRK TV Evening News (Norway), Feb. 28, 2013]



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