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Subject: Is the PA lying to European governments to receive European funding?

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**Bulletin**  
**Feb. 14, 2013**

## PMW Special Report

# Is the PA lying to European governments in order to receive European funding?

European and US money donated to the PA's general budget is paying salaries not only to all Palestinian terrorists in Israeli prisons but also to 4,000 former security and terrorist prisoners

[http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc\\_id=8550](http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=8550)

by Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik

[Palestinian Media Watch](#) has seen statements by both the British and Norwegian governments defending their payments to the Palestinian Authority's general budget for salaries. These statements came in response to two PMW reports documenting that thousands of imprisoned terrorists are among the recipients of PA salaries. In their statements, both the British and Norwegian governments say that the PA has informed them that the PA does not pay "salaries" to terrorists in Israeli prisons, but social "assistance" payments to the prisoners' families. Minister of State Alan Duncan on behalf of Britain's Department for International Development (DfID) said: "The second [PA] payment scheme [to prisoners] is intended to assist families in need of assistance." Both governments have written that this information was received from the PA. (See statements below.)

PMW has repeatedly rejected this claim and documented that the payments are indeed salaries not correlated to need but given as a reward for the prisoners' terror acts, which the PA sees as actions worthy of "esteem." (See below.) It would violate the letter or spirit of the Western donor countries' laws and certainly the intent of all Western donors, to have their contributions to the PA go to terrorists' salaries.

### **1. PA Minister's statement rejects as "rumor" the information the PA supplied to the Europeans**

The PA has now released a statement through its official news service, WAFA, explicitly contradicting the information that it supplied to the Europeans, while

corroborating PMW's documentation. The PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, Issa Karake, announced that the categorization of the prisoners' "salaries" as social "assistance" was an incorrect "rumor":

"[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]

Significantly, the PA's denial of the information it supplied to its international donors was announced by Wafa, the official Palestinian Authority news agency. (See full article below.)

Additionally, it should be noted that PA Minister Karake stressed that it is not merely an issue of language, but of the essence of the payment. Karake explained that the prisoners are supported "**out of esteem for their sacrifice and struggle,**" i.e., as a reward for their actions. UK Min. of State Duncan wrote in his letter on behalf of UK's DfID, that:

"It is true that in some cases, payments will go to families of those who have committed the sort of crime that we utterly condemn. We believe however that it would be wrong to punish innocent children and dependent family members by denying them access to social support."

What is explicit from PA Minister Karake's words is that the payments are not for the "innocent children," but "**out of esteem for their (i.e., the prisoners') sacrifice and struggle.**" To the UK and the West, terrorism is a "**crime that we utterly condemn.**" However, to the PA it is specifically those crimes that are held in "**esteem**" and rewarded with monthly salaries.

The PA's payment of salaries in recognition of their acts of terror is consistent with the PA's policy of glorifying terrorists. (See the 40 page PMW special report prepared in December 2012 for members of the Dutch Foreign Affairs Committee, documenting over 100 examples of the [PA honoring and glorifying terrorists](#), including terrorist murderers.)

## ***2. Palestinian terrorist prisoners continue to receive a salary after being released from prison. Today, 4,000 released prisoners receive a "permanent" and "full monthly salary."***

Palestinian terrorist prisoners who served more than five years in prison remain on PA's payroll even after being released. 4,000 released prisoners who were imprisoned for terrorism or other security offenses, now receive "**permanent "full monthly salaries"**, even though many are "**in the prime of their lives and could get a job and work.**" The PA's payment of a full salary to released prisoners is another example of how the PA rewards terrorists with donor money:

### ***TV interview with PA Minister Karake:***

**TV host:** "You speak of a **permanent salary** for every [released] prisoner who was in prison for more than five years, and he gets his salary while he sits at home. **Some of them are in the prime of their lives and could get a job and work.** Why not use him in the workforce and give him a salary?"

**Minister Karake:** "That's right. I presented it to the government and we decided to give preference to employ these prisoners... in order to make the

prisoner into a productive person..."

**Host:** "Do we have the number of prisoners who get full monthly salaries?"

**Karake:** "About 4,000."

**Host:** "That's an army."

**Karake:** "Yes, that's a big number, and it's growing."

**Host:** "They don't work. They just collect a salary."

**Karake:** "Some work."

**Host:** "A small number."

**Karake:** "Some volunteer and work in different institutions."

[Wattan TV, private Palestinian channel, Dec. 29, 2012, emphasis added]



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### **3. PA changes language of law from "salary" to "assistance" to satisfy the UK, but immediately reverts back to original language**

An additional indicator that the PA government seems to be intentionally deceiving its foreign donors is that the UK minister wrote that the PA admitted that its law originally stated it was paying "salaries" - "*ratib*." However, in response to the donors' queries they decided to change the language of the law from "salaries" - "*ratib*" - to "assistance" - "*la'ana*." (See UK DfID letter below.)

Strikingly, this cosmetic change - substituting one word with another - was accepted as adequate, satisfying both by the UK and Norway.

There are indications that the PA may actually have changed the terminology of the law from "salary" (*ratib*) to "assistance" (*la'ana*) to satisfy the Europeans, but then immediately changed it back under pressure from prisoners' organizations. The following statements by Palestinian prisoners' support organizations shed light on this PA pretense:

Headline: "Fares: The government has given the 'Prisoners and Released Prisoners Law' final approval."

"Prisoners' Club Chairman Qadura Fares said that the government has given final approval for what is stipulated in the Prisoners' and Released [Prisoners'] Law of 2004, **which considers payments made to prisoners 'salaries,' (Arabic: *ratib*) to which no other term applies.**

In a statement made to the media, Fares on Thursday [Dec. 27, 2012] called for an end to the disagreement in this matter, which was settled in accordance with the law passed by the previous (PA) Parliament in 2004.

The Ahrar Center for Prisoners' and Human Rights Research had demanded that President Mahmoud Abbas intervene immediately to reverse the government's decision to replace the term 'prisoner salary' (Arabic: *ratib*) with the term 'prisoner assistance' (Arabic: *i'anat*.)

The Ahrar Center had noted that Palestinian laws are explicit, and what a prisoner receives is not 'assistance' (Arabic: *ma'una*, from the same root as *i'anat*), but rather his minimal rights for the years he spent in prison."

[Al-Quds Internet edition, Dec. 27, 2012, emphasis added]

## Conclusions

After the UK and Norway questioned the PA about its payment of salaries to terrorists, the PA changed the language of the law of its payments to terrorists from "salary" to "assistance." This change was made so that these countries would continue their funding of the PA. Organizations representing the Palestinian prisoners complained about this cosmetic change in the law, which was seen as an insult to the prisoners who deserve the payments as a "salary" and a "right," not as social "assistance". The PA government responded, according to Prisoners' Club Chairman Qadura Fares, and made a final version of the law **"which considers payments made to prisoners 'salaries,' (Arabic: *ratib*) to which no other term applies."**

**This was all corroborated by the PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs who said that even the cosmetic name change to "social assistance" was only a rumor and that prisoners receive "salaries" out of the PA's "esteem" for them.**

Since 2011, PMW has been informing international donors that aid money given to the PA for salaries and for the PA's general budget pays the salaries of Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israel. This is in violation of the letter or spirit of the laws of the funding countries. These salaries are paid to all prisoners, including those who personally murdered Israelis, like 17 year-old Hakim Awad who murdered five members of the Fogel family, as well as terrorists like Ibrahim Hamid, who received 54 life sentences for planning several suicide bombings.

None of these payments have ever been denied by the PA.

Apparently, European funders of the PA have continued to fund the salaries as well as the general budget because the PA is supplying them with false and only partial information. The Europeans may not be aware that their donations to the PA were also paying salaries for 4,000 released prisoners who are able to work. Likewise, the donors were misinformed by the PA that their payments for salaries are "social assistance." The words of the Minister of Prisoners' Affairs to the Palestinian audience in Arabic are explicit: the purpose of the laws regarding the prisoners and their salary payments is not to give social "assistance" based on needs, but were enacted "out of esteem" for their actions.

Click to view pdf of this PMW report with [previous PMW reports documenting the PA's payment of salaries to terrorists](#) in prison.

Click to view pdf of [PMW's first report exposing the PA's payment of salaries to terrorists](#) in prison.

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Click to view pdf of [PMW's report on PA payment of salaries and glorification of terrorists and Dutch funding](#).

**Appendix: Statements from British and Norwegian governments about salaries**

## 1. Statement from British DfID about salaries

Mike Freer MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

16 November 2012

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 5 November, to Justine Greening, Secretary of State for International Development, red:MF/JW, enclosing an email from your constituent, Mr. David Lewis, of 37 The Grove, London, N3 1QT, about DFID's support to the Palestinian Authority (PA), in the context of recent allegations by Palestinian Media Watch.

It is completely wrong to suggest that the UK is supporting terrorism. We have robust safeguards in place to ensure that our funds do not benefit terrorist groups, and ensure that our partners do the same. We are also vigorous in investigating allegations which are made. In addition to our own investigations, we draw on independent reports from neutral groups where these are available. For example, on the issue of textbooks, independent studies by Congressional Research Services, UNESCO and others have come to very different conclusions to those of Palestinian Media Watch, finding no evidence of incitement or anti-semitism.

Our support to the PA is helping to build the institutions vitally necessary to lay the groundwork for an effective and viable Palestinian State, living in peace and security with Israel. UK aid to the PA is also helping to deliver essential services such as health and education to poor and vulnerable people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our development assistance to the PA is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding which reaffirms the PA's commitment to non-violence and a negotiated solution to the conflict. We continue to assess that President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad are committed to non-violent pursuit of a two state solution. We have reviewed the allegations made by PMW in their recent report. While we are continuing to investigate some of the details, our overall assessment is that their accusations are flawed in many respects.

Firstly, it is important to understand that the Palestinian Authority operates two schemes in respect of prisoners. The first operates at the request of the Israeli authorities and is administered by an Israeli company. Under this agreement PA funds are used to cover the immediate needs of prisoners for food and clothing. This is in line with basic international law, and indeed we would normally expect the imprisoning authority to make such provision itself.

The second payment scheme is intended to assist families in need of assistance. There are a number of points in the PMW report relating to this support that are not borne out by the facts, as set out below.

PMW states that the PA's law refers to the payments as "salaries." The document referred to is a Cabinet Decision, not a law. The word used in the

decision, "ratib," can be used for any regular payment, not just for salaries. The PA has now changed the wording in the Cabinet Decision to unambiguously refer to the payment as assistance - "la'ana." This is consistent with the PA's published budget which uses the same word for payments to prisoners families as it does for other social assistance payments. The payment is also unlike salaries in other ways, for example in that it cannot be used as a basis for mortgage lending.

*[PMW comment: The information reported by the UK regarding the meaning of the Arabic word "ratib" is incorrect. "Ratib" is the word specifically used for "salaries." Note the precise definitions in two respected Arabic - English dictionaries:*

**"(pl. رواتب rawatib) salary, pay, emolument;"**  
*[The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic]*

**"Rateb (rawateb) Salary (especially government officials and professionals). rawateb il-muwazzafin - officials' salaries".**  
*["The Olive Tree dictionary - A Transliterated Dictionary of Conversational Eastern Arabic (Palestinian)]*

PMW also say that the core payments cannot be social assistance because unmarried prisoners receive the basic payment and there are additional payments for wives and children. The Cabinet Decision states that "The spouse of the prisoner is the formal delegate to receive the payment unless the prisoner decides otherwise. If the prisoner was not married then one of the parents is delegated and the prisoner may choose one of them or any other family member."

*[PMW comment: In all cases the prisoner is in sole control of the money and only he has the right to designate the person who will receive the payments on his behalf while he is in prison. As the PA law states and as quoted correctly by Duncan: the spouse is "the delegate" who receives the money "unless the prisoner decides otherwise." It is the prisoner's money and the prisoner's decision.]*

PMW states that the amount of the payment increases with the severity of the crime rather than the needs of the family. This is not the case. Prisoners given a long sentence start on the same payment as those serving other crimes, and families with other sources of public income do not receive the payment. PMW is correct that the highest payment to families is around 12,000 Shekels, which is around £2000 per month, Only 2 prisoners' families receive this high amount, and the basic payment received by the majority of prisoners' families is much lower.

*[PMW comment: As reported by PMW previously, it is the PA's official newspaper Al-Hayat Al-Jadida that in a special financial supplement about PA salaries wrote that the average salary of prisoners is higher than that PA civil servants and PA military. (See reports in pdf)]*

It is true that in some cases, payments may go to families of those who have committed the sort of crime that we utterly condemn. We believe, however, that it would be wrong to punish innocent children and other dependent family members by denying them access to social support. We have

discussed these issues with the PA at the highest levels in recent weeks, and continue to encourage the PA to ensure that these payments are more transparent, needs-based and affordable. We have offered support to the PA in doing so.

Providing assistance in the context of an unresolved conflict that has lasted more than 60 years presents some inevitable challenges. The UK is committed to resolving this conflict in a peaceful negotiated two state solution. I am sure this is a goal on which we both can agree.

Alan Duncan

## **2. Statement from Norwegian Foreign Ministry about salaries**

"Dagbladet has asked the government a number of questions regarding Pal watch's (PMW's) information [on PA paying salaries to imprisoned terrorists], but the [Norwegian] Foreign Ministry denies these problems and refers to the salary payments as social benefits. 'The PA has, in the same way other countries' governments have, a variety of arrangements for social transfers to its citizens, including people who are imprisoned. Social benefits to the families of Palestinians in Israeli prisons are part of the total Palestinian social security system and are intended to compensate for loss of income. Such social transfers have been made for as long as the PA has existed and on social grounds, including considerations for children in the family,' writes Frode Overland Andersen in the Foreign Ministry in an email. That the prisoners receive a higher average salary than teachers, soldiers and others who perform key functions in a future Palestinian state, was not commented on by the Foreign Ministry..."

[Dagbladet.no (Norway), Sept. 4, 2011]

## **3. Wafa report on PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake's statement:**

Headline: "Karake denies rumors about changing salaries into social welfare."

**"Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake denied the stories and rumors that the [Palestinian] prisoners' (i.e., in Israeli prisons for terror related crimes) salaries would be changed to social welfare payments.**

In a press release Karake clarified that prisoners receive their stipends in accordance with regulations and the law, and their rights are protected so that it is impossible to hurt them. 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.**

He added that recent years have seen strong government support for regulations and laws that protect the rights of prisoners and their families, as [they protect] the rights of Martyred fighters.

Karake said that people should be careful regarding rumors, and not use the prisoners to promote narrow, personal aims, which caused confusion among the prisoners."

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

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