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AL-DAMEER'S TIES TO THE PFLP TERROR GROUP

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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.

10 Yad Harutzim St.
Jerusalem, Israel 9342148
Tel: +972-2-566-1020
Fax: +972-77-511-7030
mail@ngo-monitor.org
www.ngo-monitor.org

Institute for NGO Research (ו"נ 580465508#)

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INTRODUCTION

Al-Dameer is a Palestinian non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Gaza claiming to work on “raising the societal awareness in the field of [democracy and human rights](#) through working with different sectors of the local society” and on “presenting legal services to detainees inside Israeli jails, along with its activities in defending the victims of violations, whoever perpetrates them.” Many current and former officials, employees, and board members have links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a designated terrorist organization by the [US](#), [EU](#), [Canada](#), and [Israel](#).

Al-Dameer engages in anti-Israel demonization, refers to terrorists as “martyrs,” and speaks of a Palestinian “right to resist.” On June 6, 2017, Al-Dameer asserted that convicted terrorists have a “right” to receive salaries and “[condemn\[ed\] and deplore\[d\]](#) the Ramallah government’s decision to cut the salaries of a number of released prisoners in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This policy was implemented unlawfully and arbitrarily in response to the Israeli and American demands to stop paying the salaries of prisoners...”

Funding

Al-Dameer’s terror affiliation is antithetical to human rights norms and principles. Due to its affiliation with the PFLP, the provision of funds to Al-Dameer is in likely violation of international, EU, and domestic terror financing and material support laws. The organization is therefore an inappropriate partner for governments and individuals seeking to further human rights in the region.

Al-Dameer does not release financial information, reflecting a lack of transparency and accountability. In 2016-2019, [the European Union’s DEVCO program provided €446,482](#) to Al-Dameer and the [Palestinian NGO Network](#) (PNGO). In 2019, Al-Dameer also received [\\$30,000](#) from the [National Endowment for Democracy](#) (United States) for [“Promoting Rights-focused Leadership in Gaza](#). In 2017-2019, Switzerland provided Al-Dameer with [CHF 77,221](#).

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Founded by George Habash in 1967, the PFLP is a secular Palestinian Marxist-Leninist terror group, originally supported by the former Soviet Union and China. The PFLP is a designated terrorist organization by the [US](#), [EU](#), [Canada](#), and [Israel](#) and is involved in [suicide bombings](#), [shootings](#), and [assassinations](#), among other terrorist activities targeting civilians. It is well-known for hijacking commercial airlines in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as targeting civilians in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and is responsible for countless deaths and injuries.

The PFLP [assassinated Israeli Minister of Tourism Rechavam Ze’evi](#) in 2001. In 1976, its members joined with the Baader-Meinhof Gang (a West German terror group) to [hijack an Air France Tel Aviv-bound flight](#), diverting it in Entebbe, Uganda. In 2011, PFLP members took credit for the brutal murder of the [Fogel family](#), including a baby and two young children. The PFLP was also responsible for the 2014 massacre at a [synagogue in Jerusalem’s Har Nof neighborhood](#), murdering four worshipers and an Israeli Druze police officer. In August 2019, [a PFLP terror cell carried out a bombing against Israeli civilians](#), murdering 17-year-old Rina Shnerb, and injuring her father and brother.

The PFLP has never recognized the State of Israel, and opposes all negotiations, instead calling for the “liberation” of all of “historical Palestine,” regularly by means of terror.

AL-DAMEER'S ORGANIZATIONAL TIES TO THE PFLP

In November 2018, “Al-Dameer association, in coordination with the prisoners’ committee of the PFLP, organized a seminar on administrative detention and the continuation of the arrest of Khalida Jarrar,” a PFLP leader (on file with NGO Monitor, see [PFLP website for details](#)). Al-Dameer lawyer Mohammed S. Al Bardaweeel and numerous PFLP officials, including “a member of the General Central Committee of the Front, the head of the prisoners committee in Gaza” [Allam Kaabi and members of the PFLP Central Committee](#)

Mariam Abu Daqqa and Kayed al-Ghoul were present at the seminar. The PFLP’s “information office” uploaded a short film of the joint event to YouTube.

[In May 2017](#), lawyers from the Democratic Association of Lawyers – [a PFLP-linked organization](#)¹ – participated in a “march organized by the Popular Front for the Liberation to support the prisoners and against Trump’s visit to the Palestinian territories.” Photos from the event show Al-Dameer staff – including [Fathi al-Helou](#), [Mohammad Al Jaish](#), and Yousef Balousha – [waving a PFLP flag](#). Al-Dameer’s [Secretary of the Board of Directors](#) Ra’fat Sulaiman Salha also serves as the [Democratic Association of Lawyers’ Chairman](#).

In 2015, the [PFLP demanded](#) security forces in Gaza bring the perpetrators of “dangerous” threats against the former director of Al-Dameer Khalil Abu Shamala to justice. [An article in Palestinian media](#) also explains that the PFLP stressed that it would “not allow continued assaults and threats against Abu Shammala and others,” noting that they have information that enables them to deal with these threats in the event of the “failure” of security services.

In 2009, the [PFLP condemned](#) a break-in of Al-Dameer’s Gaza offices, claiming the “intrusion” was to “obtain information about the organizations and its activities.”



Al-Dameer seminar with PFLP prisoner’s committee. Al-Dameer Lawyer Mohammed Al Bardawell seen on the left. (Source: on file with NGO Monitor.)



From left to right: Al Dameer’s Yousef Balousha, unknown, and Mohamed Al Jaish at PFLP rally. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1370335576382341&set=pcb.1370327253049840&type=3&theater>)

¹ The PFLP website refers to the Democratic Association of Lawyers as a [professional framework associated with the PFLP](#).

AL-DAMEER STAFF WITH TIES TO THE PFLP

Younis al-Jarro

Al-Dameer's [Chairman of the Board](#).²

- Al-Jarro is described as a "[former leader in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#)" in his bio for a 2017 conference commemorating the violent Palestinian uprising of 1987-1993.
- According to Palestinian media, in January 2014, [al-Jarro spoke at a PFLP event](#) honoring several [members of the PFLP Central Committee](#) on their retirement. During the event, al-Jarro stressed the "need to reject differences and conflicts between the national and Islamic forces and unite within the vision and mechanism or program to achieve the desired goals."
- A December 8, 2013 article states that al-Jaro "[resigned](#)" from his role at the PFLP.

Galal Ismail Shabat

Al-Dameer's [Vice Chairman](#).³

- According to the PFLP, [Shabat spoke at a December 2016 ceremony at Al-Quds Open University in Gaza](#) commemorating the founding of the terror group. During his speech on behalf of the University, Shabat "congratulated the comrades of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) for the launching anniversary, praising the national efforts and the great sacrifices made by the Popular Front for the Protection of the Palestinian National Project."



Shabat speaking at Al-Quds Open University Ceremony commemorating the founding of the PFLP. (Source:

<https://pflp.ps/post/14369%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%84-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%85-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84>

² According to [Al-Dameer's website](#) as of October 6, 2019.

³ According to [Al-Dameer's website](#) as of October 6, 2019.

The ceremony was organized by the [Progressive Student Labor Front](#) (PSLF), which, according to the PFLP, [is one of its student organizations](#). In 2015, the PSLF organized a [PFLP military training camp](#).

Yahya Yousef al-Ghulban

Al-Dameer Board Member.⁴

- According to Al-Dameer, al-Ghulban is a "[retired Palestinian activist and former prisoner](#)."
- According to the PFLP, al-Ghulban was a [member of a 2015 PFLP delegation](#) that toured parts of Gaza. The delegation was led by [the head of the PFLP's Gaza branch, Jamil Mazhar](#).⁵
- The PFLP refers to Al-Ghulban as a "[comrade](#)."
- A November 2013 article in Arabic language media refers to al-Ghulban as a "[member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#)."
- A 2008 article by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), another Palestinian NGO with ties to the PFLP, refers to al-Ghulban as "[a leader of \(sic\) Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#)."



Screenshot of video of PSLF training camp.

(Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wP1EemYGP1E>

Yousef Balousha

Lawyer for Al-Dameer.⁶

- According to the PFLP, in August 2018, [Balousha gave a speech during the closing ceremony of a PFLP children's summer camp](#). During his speech, Balousha expressed his "pride in the graduation of the 'pioneers of culture and resistance' from our steadfast people" and focused on how "this highlights our interest in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the cultural aspects of our sons and daughters, because the responsibility for their education is upon us. We know that without an education, we will never achieve anything. Its purpose is to implant a national identity and the Palestinian struggle in the souls of



Image posted by Balousha of Israel's Minister of Tourism Rehavam Ze'evi with bullet wounds in his head. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=273389626639480&set=pb.100019053>)

⁴ According to [Al-Dameer's website](#) as of October 6, 2019.

⁵ Jamil Mazhar has made statements condoning terror against Israelis. For example, a day after the [kidnapping of three Israeli boys in 2014](#), Mazhar stated that the "kidnapping occupation soldiers and settlers is important, and a legitimate right to liberate our prisoners." In 2015, Jamil Mazhar and PFLP leaders visited a youth military summer camp, where they thanked and congratulated "the comrades...who worked to make this [camp](#) a success especially our colleagues and comrades in the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades..." See Appendix I for photos.

⁶ According to a [July 2017 Al-Dameer](#) article. He is also seen [photographed wearing an Al-Dameer vest](#) in a February 2019 photo posted on his Facebook.

our children.” He also praised PFLP leaders, including Secretary-General Ahmad Saafat, George Habash, Wadea Haddad, Abu Ali Mustafa, Ghassan Kanafani, Abu Maher Al Yamani, and “all the martyrs of the Palestinian revolution.”

- In December 2018, together with Fathi al-Helou (see below), Balousha participated in a PFLP “[cultural evening](#)” in Gaza with [PFLP leaders, including Jamil Mazhar](#) (see Footnote 5 and Appendix I).
- On October 2017, Balousha posted an image of Israel’s Minister of Tourism [Rehavam Ze’evi](#) with bullet wounds in his head. [Ze’evi was assassinated](#) by the PFLP in October 2001.
- In January 2019, Balousha posted a [PFLP poster on his Facebook page](#).



Yousef Balousha sitting in front of photos featuring terrorists and the PFLP logo.
(Source: Facebook, December 5, 2018:
<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=180768068739322&set=a.155989237883882&type=3&theater>)

Mohammed S. Al-Bardaweel

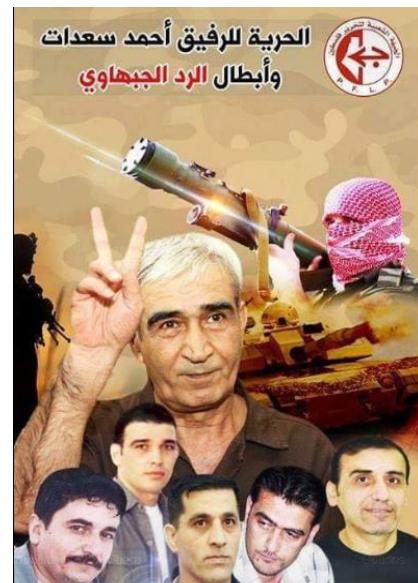
[Lawyer](#) for Al-Dameer.⁷

- Al-Bardaweel attended a November 2018 seminar organized by “Al-Dameer association, in coordination with the prisoners’ committee of the PFLP” on the “administrative detention and the continuation of the arrest of Khalida Jarrar” (on file with NGO Monitor, see above).
- According to the PFLP, in September 2015, Al-Bardaweel represented Al-Dameer at a [meeting](#) in which “at the request of the PFLP, the National Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Administrative Detainees decided on a series of moves to raise the problem of administrative detainees.”

Fathi al-Helou

[Lawyer](#) for Al-Dameer.⁸

- In December 2018, [al-Helou](#) participated in a “[cultural evening](#)” with [PFLP leaders](#) in Beit Lahia. Al-Dameer lawyer Yousef Balousha (above) also attended.
- Al-Helou’s Facebook page contains numerous PFLP photos. One posted on June 25, 2019 shows him holding PFLP sign.



Ra'fat Sulaiman Salha

[Secretary of Al-Dameer’s Board of Directors.](#)⁹

- Salha is the [chairman of the Palestinian](#)

⁷ [According to Al-Dameer’s website](#) as of October 6, 2019. He is also referred to as an Al-Dameer lawyer in a February 2019 article.

⁸ According to a [December 2017 Al-Dameer Facebook](#) post.

⁹ [According to Al-Dameer’s website](#) as of October 6, 2019.

[Democratic Association of Lawyers](#), an organization linked to the PFLP (see here for more). The PFLP website refers to the Democratic Association of Lawyers as a professional framework associated with the PFLP.



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1319939994822128&set=pb.100004184200056.-2207520000.0.&type=3&theater>

APPENDIX I: JAMIL MAZHAR AT PFLP YOUTH MILITARY SUMMER CAMP



Source: PFLP, "Graduation camp," <https://pflp.ps/image/gallery/70/%D9%86%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AC-%D9%85%D8%AE%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%83%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9>

(See also video evidence here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUV75elHEAE>)