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# PALESTINIAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS' TIES TO THE PFLP TERROR GROUP

NGO MONITOR



# Palestinian Centre for Human Rights' 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.

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## INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1995, the [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights](#) (PCHR) is a Palestinian non-governmental organization (NGO) claiming a human rights agenda, mostly relating to Gaza. Its focus is attempting to galvanize international pressure and punitive measures against Israel in the legal realm. It has targeted numerous Israeli officials, [including former Foreign Minister Tzipi Livini](#), with universal jurisdiction arrest warrants in European countries and New Zealand. PCHR lobbies UN bodies intensively, accusing Israel of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, and was instrumental in pushing the International Criminal Court to launch an investigation into Israel.

In addition, as documented in this report, PCHR has multiple links to the PFLP terror organization, [designated](#) as such by the [EU](#), the [US](#), [Canada](#), and [Israel](#).

Nevertheless, the UN and foreign governments provide PCHR with extensive funding and rely on it as a source of information.

This relationship between a self-proclaimed human rights NGO and a terror group is antithetical to human rights norms and principles. As such, PCHR is an inappropriate partner for the UN and democratic governments.

## THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP)

Founded by George Habash in 1967, the PFLP is a secular Palestinian Marxist-Leninist organization, originally supported by the former Soviet Union and China. The PFLP is a terrorist organization, [designated](#) as such by the [EU](#), the [US](#), [Canada](#), and [Israel](#). The PFLP is involved in [suicide bombings](#), [shootings](#), and [assassinations](#), among other terrorist activities targeting civilians, and was the first Palestinian organization to hijack airplanes in the 1960s and 1970s.

The group was responsible for the assassination of [Israeli Minister of Tourism Rechavam Ze'evi](#) in 2001, and its members joined with the Baader-Meinhof Gang (a West German radical group) to hijack [an Air France Tel Aviv-bound flight in 1976, landing it in Entebbe, Uganda](#). PFLP members took credit for the house invasion and murder of the [Fogel family](#) in 2011 and was responsible for the massacre at a [synagogue in Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood in 2014](#) where four worshipers and an Israeli Druze police officer were murdered. The terror organization also praised its "comrades" for their role in [the murder of Israeli Border Police office Hadas Malka](#), and wounding of four other Israelis in a [June 16, 2017 attack in Jerusalem](#). 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 with Israel](#), instead calling for the "liberation" of all of "historical Palestine," regularly by means of terror.

NGO Monitor has identified a broad network of Palestinian NGOs claiming to advance human rights or humanitarian interests that have links to the PFLP terror group. These connections include current and former NGO board members, officials, and employees who served in the PFLP or spoken on its behalf at public events and taken part in PFLP forums.

## FUNDING

PCHR's terror affiliation is antithetical to human rights norms and principles. Due to its affiliation with the PFLP, the provision of funds to PCHR 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.

- In 2018, PCHR received [CHF 272,575 from the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).
- According to its 2017 Annual Report (the most recent available), PCHR [donors](#) included: the [European Union](#), [Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat](#) (a joint funding framework from [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Denmark](#) and the [Netherlands](#) that disbanded in 2018), [Ireland](#), [Spain](#), [France](#) (Consulate General), [Open Society Institute](#), [Christian Aid \(UK\)](#), [DanChurchAid \(Denmark\)](#), [Grassroots International](#), [Kvinna Till Kvinna \(Sweden\)](#), [Trocaille \(Ireland\)](#), [Oxfam Novib \(Netherlands\)](#), Misereor (Germany), and the United Nations (OCHA, OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women).
- In 2018, PCHR received [CHF 272,575](#) from Switzerland.
- In 2017-2019, PCHR received \$502,485 from the UN OCHA "oPt Humanitarian Fund" for "[Monitoring, verification and documentation of possible IHL,IHRL violations](#)," "[Accountability of victims of Israeli violations of IHL and IHRL in Access Restricted Areas](#)," and "[Monitoring , verification and documentation of possible IHL,IHRL violations in the context of great march of return](#)."
- In 2017, PCHR, alongside four other NGOs, received [\\$751,200<sup>1</sup>](#) from the [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) for its [Information, Counseling, and Legal Assistance \(ICLA\) project](#).<sup>2</sup>
- In 2017, received [€80,000](#) from Ireland (Irish Aid) and [€70,000 from Christian Aid \(Ireland\)](#) in 2018.
- In 2017, [received €346,000 from Germany \(BMZ\)](#).
  - In 2018, [PCHR received DKK 275,000 from Dan Church Aid \(Denmark\)](#).

<sup>1</sup> OPT-17/P-HR-RL/98184/5834. For more re. Norwegian funding to NRC, see:  
<http://udtilskudd.regjeringen.no/#/en/agreement?agreementNo=QZA-16/0141-22>

<sup>2</sup> One of NRC's principal projects in the region, ICLA transfers funds to a number of radical NGOs. Through its Palestinian and Israeli partner NGOs and private lawyers, this program alone submits between 600-800 new cases to Israeli courts annually. In 2018, ICLA aimed to pursue "5,399 opened and continuing cases for legal assistance in the West Bank (West Bank 1162 new and 4237 continuing)" as well as 10 cases to be submitted to the UN and/or other international mechanisms. From 2009-2014, NRC "provided legal representation in court for 4,069 cases."

- According to information released by donors, PCHR received \$1.1 million in core funding from the [Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat](#) (joint funding from [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Denmark](#) and the [Netherlands](#)) in 2014-2017.

## PCHR'S ORGANIZATIONAL TIES TO THE PFLP

According to information posted on the [PFLP website](#), on June 27, 2015, the PFLP's prisoner committee participated in a workshop organized by PCHR. The event was held "in solidarity" with Khader Adnan, [a member and "leader" of the terror group Palestinian Islamic Jihad](#), during his [two-month long hunger strike](#). During the event, PFLP prisoner committee member Hani [Mezher called on PCHR](#) to "exert a double effort to make urgent contacts with all institutions and raise the issue of prisoners with the international community and the free world so we can save his life."

## PCHR STAFF WITH TIES TO THE PFLP

### Raji Sourani: [General Director](#)<sup>3</sup>

- In 2013, the Swedish Right Livelihood Award Foundation awarded Sourani "[the Right Livelihood Award](#), commonly known as the Alternative Nobel Prize."
  - According to the PFLP's website, the [terrorist organization sent "leader"](#) and PFLP Central Committee member Rabah Muhanna to PCHR's offices to congratulate Sourani. [PCHR Chairman Dr. Riyad Al-Zaanoun](#) "thanked the Popular Front for the visit, stressing the important national role it took upon itself in the field of adherence to Palestinian national rights and principles."
  - On February 16, 2014, the PFLP held a [ceremony](#) honoring Sourani for receiving the award. [Several members of the PFLP's Gaza Central Committee](#)<sup>4</sup> attended, including its chief, [Jamil Mizher](#).<sup>5</sup>



Raji Sourani accepts award from the PFLP on February 16, 2014. From right to left: PCHR General Director Raji Sourani, PFLP Central Committee member Rabah Muhanna, and PFLP Central Committee member Mariam Abu Daqah  
 (Source: Al Watan Voice, "The people honor the fighter Professor Raji Sourani in recognition of his role in ...")

<sup>3</sup> According to PCHR's website, as of September 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Members of the PFLP's Central Committee [in attendance](#) included [Jamil Mizher](#), [Ghazi Sourani](#), [Rabah Muhanna](#), [Mariam Abu Daqah](#), and [Kayed al-Ghoul](#).

<sup>5</sup> Jamil Mizher has made statements condoning terrorism against Israelis. For example, a day after the [kidnapping of three Israeli boys in 2014](#), Mizher stated that the "kidnapping occupation soldiers and settlers is important, and a legitimate right to liberate our prisoners." In 2015, Jamil Mizher and PFLP leaders visited a youth military summer

- During the ceremony Sourani stated that "I was in the ranks of the Popular Front, and there were comrades who taught us with their own hands. This organization has given us much more. We hope that the direction and the sense of belonging that were planted inside us will remain in our minds. We don't apologize and don't regret our past, we are proud that once we were members of this organization and we fought in its ranks" (emphasis added).
- On November 14, 2017, the Gaza branch of the PFLP held a book launch for the book Echo of Enclosure by PFLP commander Ahmed Sa'adat.
  - According to the PFLP, "members of the PFLP Central Committee spoke at the gathering, along with the fighter Raji Sourani, Director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights..."
  - Following Sa'adat's arrest by the Palestinian Authority in 2002, Sourani and PCHR repeatedly petitioned Palestinian officials to secure his release.
  - Sourani stated that Israel prohibited him from leaving Gaza in 1977-1990.
  - Sourani was imprisoned by Israel from 1979-1982 having been convicted of membership in the PFLP. According to a 1995 article in the Washington Report, Raji Sourani served "a three-year sentence [1979-1982] imposed by an Israeli court which convicted him of membership in the illegal Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine..."



Another photo of Sourani received the award. The banner reads "Recognizing the distinguished professor, Raji Sourani on receiving the Alternative Nobel Prize, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine." (Source: PCHR, "PFLP honors Lawyer Raji Sourani for Winning 'Alternative Noble Prize,'" February 20, 2014: <https://pchrgaza.org/en/?p=858>)



Raji Sourani standing at the award ceremony with the head of the PFLP in Gaza and PFLP Central Committee member Jamil Mizher (far right) (Source: Al Watan Voice, "The people honor the fighter Professor Raji Sourani in recognition of his role in transmitting the message of our people," February 17, 2014: <https://web.archive.org/web/20181018125346/https://video.alwatanvoice.com/view/2014/02/17/496986.html>)

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 II for photos.

## Jaber Wishah: Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors until 2017.

- In 1985, according to a December 27, 1985 article in the Israeli Maariv, Wishah served as "[the head of the military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Gaza](#)." A [September 1999 article](#) in Arabic language media similarly states that he was responsible for the PFLP's military apparatus.
- [Wishah was convicted](#) by Israel of "holding a leading position in a terrorist organization of which he was a member, intentionally attempting to kill an Israeli Staff Sergeant in Gaza, configuring a bomb and planting a bomb, possession of fire arms and conspiring to commit murder."
- He [was sentenced to life in prison](#) and spent [15 years](#) in Israeli prison [in 1985-1999](#).<sup>6</sup>
- Wishah was [incarcerated together with terrorist Samir Kuntar](#),<sup>7</sup> and [Wishah's mother became Kuntar's adoptive mother](#). When Kuntar was released from prison, Wishah [expressed his happiness](#) for the release of his "former cellmate," stating, "Today is a true day of joy for all Palestinians and all freedom lovers across the world."
- In response to Kuntar's death in December 2015, the "Resistance Committees" offered "[condolences](#)" to Wishah's mother. The Palestinian Resistance Committees (PRC) is a Gaza-based terrorist organization. PRC officials arrived clad in military uniforms and armed with assault rifles. Wishah [personally greeted](#) these members, including [PRC spokesman Abu Mujahid](#).<sup>8</sup>
- In [2014, Wishah participated in a PFLP event](#) where a "committee of the PFLP led by Comrade Jamil Mizher, member of the Political Bureau, Comrade Hani Khalil, the lib-



Raji Sourani participates in a PFLP-organized book launch of a publication by PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat. (From right to left) Raji Sourani, writer Abdel Nasser Farawana, and PFLP Central Committee member Allam Ka'abi. (Source: PFLP, "The Popular Front in the Gaza Strip launches the book 'Echo of Enclosure' by Commander Ahmed Saadat," November 14, 2017:

<sup>6</sup> It appears that Wishah was released as part of the [Sharm el-Sheikh agreement](#).

<sup>7</sup> On April 22, 1979, Samir [Kuntar brutally murdered a family](#), among them a four-year-old girl and an Israeli police officer. After his release, [Kuntar became a Hezbollah operative and was killed](#) on December 19, 2015. The US Department of State designated [Samir Kuntar as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist."](#)

<sup>8</sup> [According to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(MFA\)](#), "The PRC operates in coordination with Iranian authorities and the Hezbollah terrorist organization and has conducted multiple terrorist activities against Israeli civilians and IDF soldiers," including the abduction of Gilad Shalit, the kidnapping and murder of Eliyahu Asheri, and August 18, 2011 [terrorist attacks on the Israel-Egypt border](#) near Eilat, killing eight Israelis.

erated prisoner Jaber Wishah... honored more than ninety martyrs' families" (see Appendix I).

- On May 24, 2014, [Wishah took part](#) in a [PFLP event honoring the group's Central Committee](#) (see Appendix I).



Picture Samir Kuntar, Jaber Wishah's Mother, and Jaber Wishah from a video about Samir Kuntar  
(Source: Hager Press, "Jaber's mother the Palestinian mother to Samir Kuntar mourns..." Youtube (2:05), December 22, 2015:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exKcZAK0IDM>



Source: Palestine Today, "Photos: Resistance Committees support the struggle of Umm Jabor Washah by Quoting Samir Qantar," December 2015: <https://paltoday.ps/ar/post/257394/%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF>

### Bassam al-Aqraa: [Former Head of Training Unit](#)

- Aqraa served as the [head of PCHR's "Training Unit"](#) until his death in February 2018.
- In February 2018, the PFLP posted an article on its website "People hold a house of condolence for the late Bassam al-Aqraa in Cairo," referring to him as a "[companion of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#)." The article explains that the PFLP held public mourning events in his honor and called on its supporters to participate in his funeral.
- [A February 25, 2018 article in the Israeli Haaretz](#) about Aqraa mentions his involvement in PCHR and his time spent in jail, where "the Front forced us to study all the time."

PFLP information office shared a post.  
February 17 · [Share](#)

دعوة عامة  
دعوكم الجبهة الشعبية لتحرير فلسطين في شمال غزة ، للحضور والمشاركة في حفل تأبين رفيقها المناضل سالم الأقرع ، وذلك يوم شد الأحد 18/2/2018 الساعة 7 مساء ، أمام منزل عائلته الكائن آخر شارع مدارس الوكالة قرب السكة في مخيم جباليا.  
الجبهة الشعبية لتحرير فلسطين  
شمال غزة

Screenshot of memorial service notice for Bassam Aqraa from the PFLP Information Office's Facebook page  
(Source: PFLP Information Office, Facebook, February 17, 2019,  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20180812113857/https://www.facebook.com/PFLPinformationoffice/posts/14153816>

## Anwar Matar: Administrative assistant, Gaza Office<sup>9</sup>

- According to Arabic language media, Matar appears to have been active in the [PFLP in the late 1980s and was arrested](#) several times by Israel.
- In 2016, Matar [met with a PFLP representative in Tunisia](#), presenting him with a letter from the Director of the Prison Affairs Unit requesting support on behalf of Palestinian prisoners. In the article, Matar is referred to as a "released prisoner."
- In 2008, according to the book *Palestinian Documents for the Year 2008*, Matar was a member of an initiative to resolve a dispute between the senior [Islamic Jihad and PFLP officials](#) Jamil Mizher, Rabah Mahana, and Ghazi Sourani.
- 

## Khalil Shahin: Head of Economic and Social Rights Unit<sup>10</sup>

- In 2013, [PFLP organized a political seminar on](#) "ways to develop solidarity with prisoners." Members of the PFLP's Central Committee and "PCHR researcher Khalil Shanin" spoke at the seminar.

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<sup>9</sup> According to PCHR's website, as of September 2019.

<sup>10</sup> According to PCHR's website, as of September 2019. A [July 2019](#) PCHR article similarly refers to "Khalil Shahin, Director of PCHR's Economic and Social Rights Unit."

## APPENDIX I: JABER WISHAH'S PARTICIPATION IN PFLP EVENTS



Jaber Wishah participating in a May 2014 Gaza event honoring members of the PFLP Central Committee

(Source: PFLP, "Honoring the Central Committee, Picture,"  
<https://pflp.ps/image/gallery/12/%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A9>



Photos from the May 2014 Gaza event honoring members of the PFLP Central Committee

(Source: PFLP, "Honoring the Central Committee, Picture," <http://pflp.ps/ar/index.php?act=gallery&id=12>)



Jaber Wishah embracing members of the Popular Resistance Committees terror group at a December 2015 Gaza event mourning Hezbollah terrorist Samir Kuntar

(Source: Palestine Today, "Photos: Resistance Committees support the struggle of Umm Jabor Washah by Quoting Samir Qantar," December 2015:

[https://paltoday.ps/ar/post/257394/%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6\)](https://paltoday.ps/ar/post/257394/%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6))



(Source: Palestine Today, "Photos: Resistance Committees support the struggle of Umm Jabor Washah by Quoting Samir Qantar," December 2015:



Jaber Wishah (center) participating in a July 2014 PFLP event in Gaza, honoring the families of "martyrs"  
(Source: Naba News Agency, "Photos...People honor the families of the martyrs of the center mass rally," July 4, 2014: <http://www.naba.ps/arabic/?Action=Details&ID=41470>)

## APPENDIX II: JAMIL MAZHAR AT PFLP YOUTH MILITARY SUMMER CAMP



Source: PFLP, "Graduation camp,"

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180901041907/http://pflp.ps/ar/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 from August 30, 2015 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUV75eIHEAE>