Union of Agricultural Work Committees’ 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.
INTRODUCTION

Union of Agricultural Work Committee (UAWC) defines itself as a “one of the largest agricultural development institutions in Palestine as it was established in 1986 by a group of agronomists.”

The group adds that “when established, UAWC depended on volunteers completely and formed agricultural committees in the West Bank and Gaza to set the priorities of farmers and help the Union in implementing its programs and community activities.” It is “registered as a non-governmental agricultural organization according to the Palestinian Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations Law No. 1 at the Palestinian Ministry of Interior.”

UAWC rhetoric includes accusations of “ethnic cleansing,” “collective punishment,” and “apartheid,” as well as supporting a Palestinian “right of return.” UAWC also promotes BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) campaigns against Israel.

UAWC is identified by Fatah as an official Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) “affiliate” and by a USAID-engaged audit as the “agricultural arm” of the PFLP. According to academic scholar Glenn E. Robinson, UAWC was founded in 1986 by “agronomists loosely affiliated with the PFLP.”

It is important to note that UAWC has offices in both the West Bank and Gaza. The two parts of the organization participate in annual meetings together, as noted in UAWC’s Facebook photo album of its 2018 meeting that shows both branches in attendance (the Gaza branch via Skype). UAWC’s West Bank and Gaza branches also share an organizational structure (see Appendix I).

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**

UAWC claims to “reject normalization and political conditional funding.” Yet, its donors include numerous governments and international aid organizations. Additionally, UAWC’s terror affiliation is antithetical to human rights norms and principles. Due to its affiliation with the PFLP, the provision of funds to UAWC 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 2019, UAWC received €1.7 million from the Netherlands; €2.6 million in 2018; and €3.8 million in 2017.
- In 2019-2021, Spain (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation) provides UAWC with €400,000 for “Improving the economic situation of vulnerable farmers.”
- In 2019, UAWC received €232,000 from France (AFD) for a project “irrigation and collective management of water resources for improving living conditions of Palestinian farmers in Hebron, in the Palestinian territories,” with the French group Experts Solidaires.
- In 2018, UAWC received €25,848 from Oxfam Solidarité (Belgium), €241,471 from Organizzazione Per Lo Sviluppo Globale Di Comunita’ In Paesi Extraeuropei Onlus (Italy), €527,102 from Associazione Di Cooperazione E Solidarieta (Italy), and NOK 13,155,986 from Norwegian People’s Aid (Norway).
- In 2018, UAWC received $400,000 from the Dutch organization Oxfam Novib (occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund) for “urgent support for the most vulnerable families in Gaza Strip.”
- In 2018, UAWC, Jazoor, Hayat Center, and the Ministry of Health received $1.3 million from Médecins du Monde France to “Reinforce the access to quality medical, mental and psychosocial emergency response” in Gaza. Of this, $968,915 was provided by Germany and $400,000 from the UN’s “occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund.”

According to UN-OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service (FTS) database, Canada committed funding to projects involving UAWC in 2016 and 2017. Canada committed $3.5 million to Oxfam Italia for a 2017 project, “Recovery support to vulnerable farmers, fisherman and herders in Gaza Strip,” with UAWC listed as an implementing partner. This grant appears to correspond with “GC-2017-Q4-0151,” found on the “open.canada.ca” website, with the same project name and for the same amount.

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1 OPT-18/ER/115921 (found on fts.unocha.org and on file with NGO Monitor).
2 OPT-18/H/115137 (found on fts.unocha.org and on file with NGO Monitor).
3 OPT-17/A/97156/R (found on fts.unocha.org and on file with NGO Monitor).
In 2016, according to FTS, Canada committed $3 million to CARE International for “humanitarian assistance – emergency livelihoods response to small-scale farmers affected by the Gaza crisis,” with UAWC included as an NGO partner. This grant appears to correspond with “GC-2017-Q1-0009” on the “open.canada.ca” website, a multi-year food security grant of $7 million to CARE Canada for work in the West Bank and Gaza.

UAWC’S ORGANIZATIONAL TIES TO PFLP

- According Fatah’s website, UAWC is a PFLP “affiliate.”
- In 2014, UAWC opened a center to market agricultural products. The Deputy Secretary-General of the PFLP at the time, Abdul Rahim Malloc, attended the inauguration event.
- In 2012, UAWC organized an event in commemoration of the Nakba, where the group “extended a greeting of love, loyalty, dignity, and pride to our captives in the usurping occupation prisons who are fighting the empty intestine for their rights and freedom. All greetings to them, headed by Secretary General of the Popular Front Ahmed Saadat.”
- In 2011, according to an article in Alwatan Voice, UAWC “honored dozens of prisoners” at an event attended by leading PFLP officials. According to the article, “the Director General of the Agricultural Union Mohamed Bakri welcomed the distinguished guests…. At the end of the ceremony, the Honorary Committee was presented by Mr. Jamil Al-Majdalawi, Mr. Kayed Al-Ghoul, Dr. Mariam Abu Daqqa, Mr. Younis Al-Jrou, Majdi Yaghi...”
- In 2010 in Ramallah, UAWC “celebrated Land Day in the presence of a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Deputy Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Abdel Rahim Malloh.”
- In 2010, UAWC “organized a solidarity day with the Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Ahmed Saadat, prisoners and detainees in the Israeli occupation prisons in the presence of the President of the Federation and the Executive Director of the Federation and all its members.”

UAWC – WEST BANK EMPLOYEES WITH TIES TO THE PFLP

Numerous UAWC staff members, founders, board members, general assembly members, and senior staff members have ties to the PFLP terror group.

Samer Arbid

According to Arabic-language media, Arbid worked as UAWC’s accountant at the time of his...
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2019 arrest. According to Samidoun, yet another PFLP-linked NGO, Arbid was the “financial director of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees in the West Bank” in 2016.

Previously, the PFLP-tied NGO Addameer’s website listed Arbid as its accountant for several years.

- According to Israeli security officials, on August 23, 2019, Samer Arbid commanded a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terror cell that carried out a bombing against Israeli civilians, murdering 17-year-old Rina Shnerb, and injuring her father and brother. According to the Israel Security Agency (Shabak), Arbid prepared and detonated the explosive device.
  - According to Arbid’s indictment, Arbid was indicted on 21 counts in Israeli military court. His alleged crimes include:
    - Premeditated causing of death
    - Planting an explosive
    - Multiple counts of premeditated attempt to cause death. These include involvement in shooting attacks against civilian buses and private vehicles, as well as the August 23, 2019 bomb attack in which Rena Schnerb was murdered.
    - Illegal possession of weapons.
    - Weapons trafficking.
    - Membership in an illegal organization.
- According to UAWC, Arbid was placed in administrative detention in December 2015. According to Samidoun, Arbid “was ordered to an additional three months’ administrative detention” on March 12, 2016.
- Similarly, Samidoun reported that Arbid was arrested on September 23, 2013 and placed in administrative detention.
- According to Samidoun, Arbid was

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6 According to photos posted on UAWC’s Facebook in March 2019, his attendance at UAWC’s 2018 annual assembly, and an October 3, 2019 Alaraby article.
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placed in administrative detention from March 2007 to August 2008.

- In an Addameer-produced video from April 2013, Arbid describes his numerous arrests. He states that he was arrested at the beginning of 2003 and sentenced to two and a half years in prison, and served an additional year in administrative detention.

Abdul Razeq Farraj

UAWC Finance and Administration Director.

- Farraj was arrested on October 23, 2019 and indicted on 4 counts in Israeli military court. His alleged crimes include:
  - Holding a position in an illegal organization. This allegedly included responsibility for recruiting new members into the PFLP. Under this count, the indictment notes that Samer Arbid informed Farraj about “attacks and attempted attacks” carried out by the terror cell led by the former, as well as details pertaining to its weapons and explosives.
  - Aiding an attempt to cause death in connection to the August 2019 bombing.
- The indictment also states that “a few days after the terror attack, Farraj

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7 According to a document published by Amnesty International on August 16, 2018. His LinkedIn profile listed him as a member of UAWC at the time of his arrest. He is also seen in a March 21, 2019 photo at a UAWC event.
met with Hanatsheh at Farraj’s place of work office and the two discussed the attack.”

- Spent six years, from 1985-1991, in “an Israeli prison after being convicted of affiliation with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.”
- According to Amnesty International, Farraj was released from prison in July 2018 after spending 14 months (from May 2017) in administrative detention.

Ismat al-Shuli

Member of UAWC’s Board of Directors until at least 2016.8

- Al-Shuli was in Israeli prison for seven years, beginning in 1975, for “belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.” He was also in jail for “five years from 1983 to 1988, and then administrative detention for two periods of 16 months, 1989 and then again in 1990, bringing the number of years in detention to 14 years.” Al-Shuli was again arrested on March 4, 2014 and released on January 1, 2015 after 10 months in administrative detention.
- A December 2017 article in Palestinian media refers to al-Shuli as a “PFLP leader” and refers to a statement he gave during a “mass rally” through the streets of Ramallah with “thousands of Palestinians, including supporters of the PFLP.”
- In September 2016, al-Shuli spoke at a PFLP event commemorating PFLP Secretary General Abu Ali Mustafa and was referred to as a PFLP “leader.”
- On March 30, 2010, Al-Shuli attended a UAWC “Land Day” celebration. Other attendees included PFLP Deputy Secretary-General Abdel Rahim Mallah and UAWC board members Bashir Al Khairi, Al-Barghouthi, and Khalid Al-Hadmi.

Khaled Hidmi

- Was UAWC’s General Director until 2014.
- Hidmi simultaneously headed the UAWC’s West Bank branch and the Israeli Agricultural Work Committee organization. This Israeli entity was disbanded by a court order in 2018 due to financial irregularities and a lack of transparency (on file with NGO Monitor).
- As mentioned above, in 2014, UAWC opened a new center to market agricultural products. The center’s inaugural

8 According to a 2016 UAWC article.
event was attended by Hadmi, as well as Abdul Rahim Malloh, then Deputy Secretary-General of the PFLP.

Yusuf Abd al-Haq

Yusuf Abd al-Haq was member of UAWC’s Board of Directors until at least 2016. In 2014, Abd al-Haq was referred to as a legal and economic adviser at a UAWC conference. In 2018, he took part in the UAWC’s annual general assembly.

- Referred to, on multiple occasions, as a PFLP “leader.”
- In February 2014, according to the PFLP, “Dr. Yousef Abdul Haq, a former lecturer at the university, spoke on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, discussing Habash’s life as well as a current political analysis of the Palestinian cause.”
- In 2014, according to Al Jazeera, “The Israeli occupation forces launched a campaign of arrests that included leaders and cadres of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) at An-Najah University in Nablus in the northern West Bank. Dr. Yousef Abdul-Haq – Professor of Economics at An-Najah University in Nablus – was one of the most prominent detainees...”

Ahmad Sufan

Member of UAWC’s Board of Directors until at least 2012.10

- According to Palestinian media, in 2014, “The members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Ahmad Sufan and Yasin Farraj were arrested.”
- Sufan was also arrested in 2012.

Muhammad Nujum

Manager of UAWC’s Jericho office, apparently in 2012-2018.

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9 George Habash is the founder of the PFLP.
10 According to a 2012 UAWC article.
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- According to UAWC, in 2012, Nujum was arrested and held in administrative detention.

**Fouad Abu Seif**

Director of UAWC’s Operations and Development Department until at least 2012.¹¹

- According to Ma’an News Agency, on July 26, 2012, the “Israeli occupation forces at dawn arrested the Director of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees Operations and Development Department, Fouad Abu Seif…”
- UAWC “denounced” Abu Seif’s arrest.

**Mu’ayyad Bashart**

UAWC’s Jericho Project Coordinator until at least 2012.¹²

- According to UAWC, Bashart was arrested on January 8, 2012.

**Bashir al-Khairi**

Former president of UAWC’s Board (until 2011).

- A May 4, 2014 PFLP article refers to Al-Khairi as a “leader” and a “comrade.” The article also explains that Al-Khairi attended a May 1, 2014 PFLP event where a mural was unveiled “honouring al-Hakim, Dr. George Habash, the founder of the Front and the Arab Nationalist Movement.
- In August 2014, according to the PFLP, al-Khairi stressed that the “approach of resistance and liberation in the life of Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa is still firmly in the mind of every free Palestinian” at a PFLP event commemorating the “13th Anniversary of Martyrdom of its Secretary General Abu Ali Mustafa.” At the event, Al-Khairi stated that “the time has come to recognize those who contributed to the steadfastness of Gaza in its war against the Zionist enemy, namely Iran, Syria, and Lebanon, headed by Hezbollah.”
- According to a 2002 CNN article, Khairi was the head of the PFLP political bureau.
- According to a 2013 AusAID document, Bashir al Khairi was “convicted of terrorist offences” in 1969 and gauged for 15 years.”
- In statements in 2012 and 2014, the PFLP referred to Al-Khairi as an “historic leader,” a “comrade,” and a “leader.”
- Khairi was arrested in 2010 and 2011. According to an article in Arabic language media, in 2010, Al-Khairi was arrested by the IDF along with other PFLP members. The article refers to him as being a member of the PFLP’s National Council.
- Al-Khairi also served on the PFLP-tied NGO Addameer’s Board of Directors.

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¹¹ According to a July 2012 article published in Ma’an News Agency.
¹² According to a 2012 UAWC article.
Rezeq Al-Barghothy

Chairman of UAWC’s Board of Directors.¹³

- In April 2016, was described in Palestinian media as “The representative of Ahmed Saadat, head of the Popular Front.”
- In 2016, Al-Barghothy participated in a sit-in “in solidarity” with Palestinian prisoners who were on a hunger strike. He is seen standing in front of a PFLP banner and holding PFLP signs for prisoners.
- On August 5, 2017, Al-Barghothy posted on Facebook a eulogy for Ammar Tirawi, a “Palestinian terrorist who carried out two shooting attacks on July 15, 2017,” referring to him as a “hero.”

UAWC – GAZA EMPLOYEES WITH TIES TO THE PFLP

Zakaria Bakr

UAWC’s “head of the Gaza Fisherman Committee.”¹⁴

- Bakr is referred to in Palestinian media as a PFLP “comrade.”
- In 2017, according to the PFLP, Bakr, alongside members of the PFLP Central Committee, participated in a sporting event organized by the PFLP in honor of the anniversary of the organization’s assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze’evi in 2001. Speakers celebrated that “the knights of Palestine and the PFLP overthrew the head of the criminal Ze’evi and sent him to the garbage of history, stressing that the only language understood by the enemy it is the language of bullets.” At the event, Bakr was described as a PFLP “comrade.”

¹³ According to a May 2019 UAWC article.
¹⁴ According to a 2019 International Middle East Media Center article.
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In May 2014, Bakr attended a PFLP Nakba day event.

In February 2016, Bakr attended a PFLP event in support of Palestinian prisoners.

On June 16, 2019, Bakr posted the following virulently antisemitic and graphic image on his Facebook account:

Hiba Abdul Kareem

Was elected to UAWC’s Board of Directors in May 2016.  

The PFLP refers to Kareem as a “comrade.”

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15 According to a May 21, 2016 post on UAWC’s website.
In August 2018, according to the PFLP, Kareem spoke at a PFLP event and “welcomed attendees” in honor of “martyr Jabhahaoui” under the slogan “going on the path of martyrdom and resistance.” Kareem’s speech further paid “tribute” to “martyrs.” According to the PFLP’s description of the event, “the hall was decorated with a number of PFLP banners, pictures of PFLP martyrs and its Secretary General, Commander Ahmed Saadat, as well as pictures of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah…”

In November 2017, according to the PFLP, Kareem participated in a PFLP meeting. The PFLP cites her as a “project coordinator” and refers to the speech she gave about project implementation mechanisms at the event.

In December 2016, according to the PFLP, Kareem was spoke at a large PFLP gathering in “memory of the martyr Sami Madi.” At the event, Jamil Mezher (see above) addressed the PFLP, called for “Intifada and resistance” and celebrated PFLP hijackings and attacks such as the assassination of Minister Ze’evi and the Har Nof synagogue massacre.

In November 2015, the PFLP referred to Kareem as a “member of the center district leadership” to help “families in need and affected by the aggression…” According to the PFLP, Kareem explained that the “campaign was carried out in conjunction with the launching of the Popular Front and the embodiment of its social and humanitarian role…”

Magdy Yaghi

Former member of UAWC’s Board of Directors (from 2010 until at least 2012). In 2019, Yaghi participated in a UAWC event.

The PFLP refers to Yaghi as a “member of the regional command” and a “comrade.”

In February 2019, Yaghi participated in a memorial service organized by the PFLP for Maher Yamani, a PFLP “founder” and “member of the Central Committee and one of its most prominent military commanders.” Yamani “coordinated special operations…in particular the operation against an aircraft of the Israeli company El Al in July 1968 in Greece.” “Fighters” of the PFLP’s Abu Ali Mustapha Brigades and “civil society representatives” attended the event.

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16 The PFLP refers to Sami Madi as a “member of the leadership of the Front in Deir al-Balah, Gaza, and a leader of the PFLP media committee and the Front’s representative on the Refugees’ Committee.” Additionally, according to Electronic Intifada, Madi was a “PFLP activist” who on the day he was killed “had led a demonstration that day to mark the 48th anniversary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.”
In 2014, Yaghi participated in a PFLP trip to several high schools in Gaza to commemorate the 47th anniversary of the terror group’s founding.
Taghreed Jomee

Served as a UAWC board member in 2010-2012.

• Jomee was a member of the PFLP’s Central Committee until at least 2013.

Suliman Shahin (Shaheen)

According to his Facebook, Shahin works at UAWC Gaza.17

• Shahin was part of the PFLP’s Progressive Student Action Front (PSAF), the student arm of the PFLP. In August 2017, Shahin performed at a PSAF ceremony.
• Shahin is tagged in a February 2014 photo on Facebook as having received a PFLP award upon his graduation in agricultural engineering.
• Shahin has shared a number of images on his Facebook page, calling for or showing acts of violence:


17 Note first source dates to 2014, and second to 2018.
Jaber Qarmout

According to a May 2018 UAWC’s Facebook post, Qarmout is a member of UAWC’s administrative council.

- In 2017 and 2016, Qarmout celebrated the “martyrdom” of his brother Zidan Qarmout with PFLP members, including a commander of the Abu Ali Mustapha Brigades.
- In 2014, Qarmout attended a graduation ceremony organized by the Progressive Student Action Front, the PFLP’s “student organization.”

APPENDIX I: UAWC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE