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UNION OF HEALTH WORK COMMITTEES' TIES TO THE PFLP TERROR GROUP

NGO MONITOR



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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

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1985, the [Union of Health Work Committees](#) (UHWC) is a “[Palestinian, non-governmental, health, grass-rooted, non-profit organization](#)” that claims to “provide comprehensive health services...to all sectors of the Palestinian people...through its health centers and community programs.” UHWC uses demonizing rhetoric, including [accusing Israel](#) of “Urbanicide,” “Genocide,” and “mass killing of civilians.” UHWC signed the [2005 Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS](#) and helped organize the 2007 [First Palestinian Conference for the Boycott of Israel \(BDS\)](#).

UHWC is identified by Fatah as a PFLP “[affiliate](#)” and in a 1993 [USAID-engaged audit](#) report (by the Democratic Institutions Support Project) as “the PFLP’s health organization.” Citing PFLP connections, on June 9, 2015, Israel’s Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon [declared](#) that “the group of people or institutions or association known as the ‘Union of Health Work Committees-Jerusalem [HWC]’...or any other name that this association will be known by, including all of its factions and any branch, center, committee or group of this association is an unauthorized association, as defined by the Defense Regulations” (p.6489).

UHWC’s “[sister organization](#)” (as referred to by Viva Salud, one of its Belgian partners) in the West Bank and Jerusalem is Health Work Committees (HWC). HWC states that “among the outcomes of the post-Oslo situation, as a result of the geopolitical situation, [the Health Work Committees formed separate administrations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip](#). Each department has worked relatively independently to maintain a healthy political and developmental vision and action strategies that take the site’s privacy.”

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 officer 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](#), instead calling for the “liberation” of all of “historical Palestine,” regularly by means of terror.

In addition to UHWC, 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

UHWC's terror affiliation is antithetical to human rights norms and principles. Due to its affiliation with the PFLP, the provision of funds to UHWC 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 [2017](#), total income was NIS 14.7 million; total expenses were NIS 16.2 million.
- In October 2018 – December 2019, Canada provided \$1 million (CAD) to UNICEF for “health programs” project in Gaza. The implementing partner listed on the project is UHWC (on file with NGO Monitor).
- In 2015-2018, the autonomous Basque Country in Spain provided UHWC and its Spanish NGO partners with [€1 million](#).
- In 2015-2018, Belgium (Directorate-General for Development Cooperation; DGD) provided UHWC and [Health Work Committees](#) with [€605,714](#) via the Belgian NGO [Viva Salud](#) (formerly [Third World Health Aid](#)).
- In 2013-2015, DGD provided UHWC and Palestinian Medical Relief Society with [€185,306](#) via the Belgian NGO Oxfam Solidarité.
- In 2017-2018, UHWC received \$953,793 from the UNOCHA oPt Humanitarian Fund for “[Comprehensive Emergency response to immediate health and protection needs of vulnerable population of Gaza Strip](#)” and for [two projects](#) at Al-Awda Hospital in Gaza.
- In 2016, UHWC and Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) received [€30,000](#) “for the population of Gaza in the field of education and psychological support” from the French BDS group [Association France Palestine Solidarité](#) (AFPS).

UHWC Organizational Ties to PFLP

- UHWC is identified by Fatah as an official PFLP “[affiliate](#)” and by a 1993 [USAID-engaged audit](#) as the “the PFLP's health organization.”
- As academic scholar Glenn E. Robinson, who also identifies UHWC as a “[PFLP-affiliated health committee](#),” explains that “**Many-probably most-doctors who joined the UHWC had political leanings similar to the leftist PFLP.** As health committees tied to other political factions also existed, it was common for doctors and staff to work with that health group which reflected their politics. **Both the providers and, to a lesser degree, the recipients of these medical services were aware of the larger political agenda. The ability to translate medical-and other social-services into a particular political vision was the key to the struggle within the Palestinian community for ideological hegemony**” (emphasis added).

- HWC's [Youth Development Program](#), "A community, cultural, and social development program that provide services to Jerusalemite youth through 'Nidal Center,'" was shut down by Israeli authorities from 2009 to 2012 because, in the words of the [Jerusalem District Court](#), it served as "a place of action of the [PFLP] organization." According to the Jerusalem District Court, "following the closure of the [Center], the PFLP began operating under the guise of the non-profit the Union of Health Work Committees – Jerusalem...on June 9, 2015 at the request of the Minister of Defense the non-profit was an unlawful organization..."

Selected UHWC Staff Members with Ties to PFLP

Numerous UHWC staff members, founders, board members, and senior and subordinate staff members have ties to the PFLP terror group.

Dr. Rabah Muhanna: Referred to as one of UHWC's "[founders](#)" and former "[head](#)."

- According to the PFLP and the [Palestinian NGO Al Mezan](#), Muhanna served as member of the PFLP [political bureau](#).
- In 2012, speaking on behalf of the PFLP at an event "in Gaza City marking he 45th anniversary of the founding of the Front on December 10," Muhanna declared that the PFLP "[will continue to adhere to liberating all of historic Palestine, from the river to the sea, and will never recognize Israel](#)."
- According an August 2012 PFLP article, Muhanna spoke at a "Jerusalem Day rally in Gaza City" where affirmed that "[Jerusalem is not going to be restored by absurd negotiations](#)" and that "the most effective way to restore our rights, the city of Jerusalem and all of Palestine is constant struggle and resistance in all of its forms, popular, armed, cultural and economic."
- On May 5, 2019, the PFLP issued a [statement](#) mourning Muhanna's death and referring to him as a "warrior and a great national leader" and "one of the most prominent national leaders in the Gaza Strip." During his funeral, [Muhanna's coffin was escorted by armed PFLP militants](#).
- Muhanna regularly participated in UHWC activities, such as [accompanying foreign delegations](#) and attending [charity events](#).
- In addition to UHWC, Muhanna "[contributed to the establishment](#)" of the [Union of Agricultural Work Committees](#) (UAWC) and [Addameer](#) – two other PFLP "[affiliate\[s\]](#)" NGOs.



UHWC [mourning](#) Muhanna's death (May 5, 2019) (Source: UHWC Gaza, Facebook, May 5, 2019: <https://tinyurl.com/yx9bnor7>)



Muhanna speaking at a PFLP event. (Source: PFLP, "Popular Front mourns member of its political bureau..." May 5, 2019: <http://www.pflp-lb.org/news.php?go=fullnews&newsid=8780>)



[Muhanna's](#) coffin escorted by PFLP armed terrorists (May 14, 2019) (Source: on file with NGO Monitor.)

Dr. Mohammed Abdel Qader Abu Samr: A "[founder](#)"¹ and was a UHWC "[member](#)."²

- Described by the PFLP as a "comrade fighter" in a 2016 [statement](#) mourning his death.



PFLP poster [mourning](#) Abu Samr death (Source: PFLP, "Popular Front in the Gaza Strip mourns comrade..." March 28, 2016: <https://tinyurl.com/yxtz25ye>)



UHWC [mourns](#) Abu Samr death (Source: UHWC Gaza, Facebook, March 17, 2016: <https://tinyurl.com/y242roy9>)



Abu Samr holding an automatic rifle next to a child (From "The martyr Mohammed Abdel Qader Abu Samr" [video](#)) (Source: Lina Zeater, YouTube, April 11, 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c395xq0AdRw>)

¹ According to a [May 7, 2016 article](#) on the PFLP's website.

² According to a [March 17, 2018 article](#) published in Amadps.net.

Magdi Yaghi:

UHWC treasurer; ³ “board member” in 2016-2019; and 2016 “deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors.”

- 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 a “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 (see photo below).
- In 2014, Yaghi participated in a PFLP organized field trip to several high schools in Gaza to commemorate the 47th anniversary of its founding.
- In addition to UHWC, Yaghi is involved with the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), another PFLP “affiliate.” In 2013, he served as a UAWC board member. He also participated in a 2019 UAWC event.



Yaghi at workshop for the launch of the UHWC strategic plan for 2019-2023 (Source: Magdi Yaghi, Facebook, March 20, 2019:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2116053031783065&id=100001351658383)

³ As of an [August 8, 2019 post](#) on UHWC’s website.



In February 2019, [Yaghi participated in a PFLP memorial service](#) for PFLP founder Maher Yamani (Source: PFLP, "Popular Front in the Gaza Strip holds memorial..." February 4, 2019: <https://tinyurl.com/y4cmbxso>)



Yaghi with senior PFLP members [Abu Nidal Toman](#) and [Jamil Mizher](#). (Source: Magdi Yaghi, Facebook, December 7, 2013: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=615742195147497&set=pb.100001351658383.-2207520000.1570004710.&type=3&theater>)



Yaghi [marching](#) with PFLP members carrying hatchets and Molotov cocktails (Source: Magdi Yaghi, Facebook, November 6, 2015: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=933934089994971&set=pb.100001351658383.-2207520000.1549889283.&type=3&theater>)

Dr. Tayser Al Sultan: [Executive Director](#) in 2015.⁴ A [March 2019 US Embassy document](#) lists Al Sultan as a “director” of UHWC. Al Sultan [attended](#) UHWC’s 2019 general assembly.

- In 2015, Al Sultan [attended](#) a PFLP organized “[graduation ceremony for the ‘Pioneers of Return’ camps in the Gaza Strip,](#)” which featured armed PFLP activists performing military maneuvers.



[Tayser Al Sultan](#) (far right) viewing the “Pioneers of Return” ceremony (Shaker Jouda Facebook, August 30, 2015: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153569203947605&set=a.10153569203572605&type=3&theater>)



“[Graduation ceremony](#) for the ‘Pioneers of Return’ camps in the Gaza Strip” (PFLP, Popular Front Organizes Graduation Ceremony...” August 30, 2015: <https://tinyurl.com/y65d2zj6>)



“[Graduation ceremony](#) for the ‘Pioneers of Return’ camps in the Gaza Strip” (PFLP, “Popular Front Organizes Graduation Ceremony...” August 30, 2015: <https://tinyurl.com/y5mr8d3n>)

⁴ According to a [June 2015 article](#) on UHWC’s website.

Fares Nasser:

Director of Administration and Human Resources.⁵

- In 2017, Nasser hosted an event at his house to commemorate the 50 Anniversary of the establishment of the PFLP.

<p>فارس ناصر added a new photo. July 8, 2018 · 🌐</p> 	<p>فارس ناصر December 3, 2017 · 🌐</p> <p>رفقنا اجنثا اصدفاننا اعضاء التجمع الديمقراطي للمهن الطبية في الوسطى يشرفنا حضوركم الثلاثاء الساعة 3 في منزلي على شرف انطلاقه الجبهة الشعبية 50</p> <p>الجهة الشعبية لتحرير فلسطين منطقة الشهيد وديع حداد</p> <p>السيدة/ _____ المحترم/ة</p> <p>تشرف</p> <p>الجهة الشعبية لتحرير فلسطين - منطقة الشهيد وديع حداد والتجمع الديمقراطي للمهن الطبية بدعوتكم لحضور حفل الاستقبال على شرف الانطلاقة الـ 50 للجهة الشعبية وذلك يوم الثلاثاء الموافق 2017/12/05 في تمام الساعة الثالثة مساءً في منزل د/ مروان أبو ناصر - الزوايدة - أرض أبو فاسم - جنوب أبراج النصيرات</p> <p>حضوركم دعم فسيح التحرير والاستقلال</p>
<p>Nasser surrounded by UHWC medics (Source: Farres Nasser, Facebook, July 8, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2013098052041742&set=a.1419190638099156&type=3&theater)</p>	<p>Nasser's Facebook post about the event he organized is his home celebrating the 50 Anniversary of the establishment of the PFLP (Source: Fares Nasser, Facebook, December 3, 2017: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1764</p>
<p>فارس ناصر is with Hassan Naser. December 5, 2017 · 🌐</p> <p>صور من احتفال الاستقبال ذكري الانطلاقة 50 المازد الاحمر الجبهة الشعبية شكرا لكل من شاركنا حفلا</p> 	<p>Nasser shared pictures of the event he hosted featuring the PFLP flag and portraits of Ahmad Sa'adat and Abu ali Mustafa, the current and former PFLP Secretary-General (Source: Fares Nasser, Facebook, December 5, 2017: https://www.facebook.com/fars_nasr2/posts/1766681246683425)</p>

⁵ According to his [Facebook profile](#), last accessed on October 10, 2019.

Suhail Al Tanani:

Referred to as the “[Direction of the Union’s Communication and Advocacy Department](#)” in an October 2019 interview posted on UHC’s website. He was previously, in 2017, referred to as a Community Centers coordinator.⁶

- According to the PFLP, Al Tanani also serves as [a staff officer at the PFLP Al-Qader school](#).
- The PFLP refers to Al Tanani as a “[comrade](#).”
- In January 2019, [Al Tanani spoke at a PFLP-organized graduation ceremony](#) at the Al-Qader school.
- Spoke at an [August 2018 event](#) opening the Al-Qader al-Jabhawi school that featured a delegation of PFLP leadership. Al Tanani stated that the school would “work hard as an integrated team in order to preserve the revolutionary intellectual identity and build an advanced generation capable of facing Current and future challenges.”



Suhail Al Tanani stands next to Suhair Khader, “[a member of the Central Committee of the PFLP](#),” during the 2019 graduation ceremony at the Al-Qader school. They are standing in front of a PFLP flag (Source: PFLP, January 7, 2019: <https://tinyurl.com/u7zkkjs>)



Suhail Al Tanani during a [2018 UHC workshop](#) (Source: UHC Gaza Union of Health Work Committees, Facebook, January 12, 2019: <https://www.facebook.com/UHCWaza/photos/a.216210445089335/2153760718000955/?type=3&theater>)

Dr. Fadi Al Ajrami:

In 2016, Al Ajrami was elected to UHC’s [Board of Directors](#). He is also referred to as a [member of the Board of Directors](#) in a May 2015 UHC article.

- According to the PFLP, Al Ajrami is a “[member of the Central Committee of the Popular Front](#).”

⁶ According to a [November 2017 article on UHC’s website](#).

Mariam Abu Dakka:

In May 2019, attended the UHCW “[extraordinary general assembly](#).” She also attended the [2018 UHCW general assembly](#). Abu Dakka’s formal position within the NGO is unclear.

- Abu Dakka has been described as “[one of the first female military leaders](#)” and a “Palestinian female figure in armed resistance.”
- According to a January 2019 *Jerusalem Post* article, Abu Dakka is a “[senior PFLP official](#).”
- In February 2019, Abu Dakka and Madgi Yaghi [participated in a memorial service organized by the PFLP for Maher Yamani](#), a prominent PFLP commander (see Magdi Yaghi above).



Abu Dakka wearing a PFLP t-shirt standing next to a PFLP armed terrorist (on file with NGO Monitor)

UHCWGaza اتحاد لجان العمل الصحي added a new photo. 22 hrs · 🌐

Abu Dakka attending UHCW’s 2019 “[extraordinary general assembly](#)” (Source: [UHCW Gaza Union of Health Work Committees, Facebook, May 12, 2019](#): <https://www.facebook.com/UHCWGaza/photos/a.216210445089335/2331679036875788/?type=3&theater>)



Abu Dakka posing next to Leila Khaled, a Palestinian terrorist who participated in armed hijackings of TWA Flight 840 in 1969 and El Al Flight 219 in 1970. (Source: [Mariam Abu Dakka, Facebook, December 19 2012](#): [https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=393730144049300&set=a.122530504502\)600&type=3&theater](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=393730144049300&set=a.122530504502)600&type=3&theater))

Mohammed Abuzaid:

Radiographer.⁷

- Numerous posts on Abuzaid’s Facebook page demonstrate his connection to the PFLP, and in particular to its armed branch.

Abuzaid [wearing a military uniform standing next to PFLP armed terrorists](#) (Source: Mohammed Abuzaid, Facebook, December 12, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1501136659971373&set=a.625706934181021&type=3&theater>)

Abuzaid [wearing a military uniform at a PFLP event](#) (Source: Mohammed Abuzaid, Facebook, December 21, 2013: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=553661068052275&set=a.114035058681547&type=3&theater>)

Abuzaid [wearing a UHCW vest \(Fadi al-Khatib, Facebook, screenshot taken on July 2, 2019 on a file with NGO Monitor.\)](#)

Abuzaid [wearing a PFLP vest](#) (Source: Mohammed Abuzaid, Facebook, May 2, 2018: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1650888258329545&set=t.100002251616729&type=3&theater>)

⁷ According to his [Facebook profile](#), last accessed on October 10, 2019.

Ahmed M Alhawajra:

UHCW paramedic field worker (on file with NGO Monitor).⁸

- Alhawajra's Facebook posts (below) indicate his involvement with the PLFP terror group and its armed branch (on file with NGO Monitor).



Photo of Alhawajra featuring destruction and the PFLP media office logo



Alhawajra wearing a UHCW vest during the violent demonstrations along the Israel-Gaza border



Alhawajra wearing a combat vest with a PFLP logo

⁸ According to Ahmed M Alhawajra's Facebook, as of February 10, 2019. On file with NGO Monitor.

Fadi al-Khatib:

According to his Facebook account, is a “specialist” at UHWC (on file with NGO Monitor).⁹

- Al-Khatib also states that he is a “member of the Student Office at the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine” (on file with NGO Monitor).
- Al-Khatib’s Facebook posts indicate his involvement with the PLFP terror group and its armed branch (on file with NGO Monitor).

	<p>Avvocato Yousef Balousha is with Ahmed M ALhawajra and 4 others. November 22, 2018</p> <p>فريق مركز العودة الفلسطيني _ التصيرات #السلام_الأزرق #مشترديشان #aldameer #UHWC</p> <p>See Translation</p>
<p>Al-Khatib wearing a military uniform at a PFLP event. Armed PFLP terrorists stand next to him. (Source: Fadi al-Khatib, Facebook, screenshot taken on July 2, 2019 and on file with NGO Monitor.)</p>	<p>Al-Khatib during a UHWC workshop funded by the Belgium government. ALhawajra (see above) is seen standing behind him (Source: Yousef Balousha, Facebook, November 22, 2018: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=285712528740523&set=a.100391140605997&type=3&theater)</p>
	<p>Al-Khatib holds a poster featuring PFLP terrorists. A child wearing military uniform is seen in the front holding an automatic rifle (Facebook, February 2, 2019: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2254031848177880&set=a.2146092248971841&type=3&theater)</p>

⁹ According to Fadi al-Khatib’s Facebook, as of July 2, 2019. On file with NGO Monitor.

UHWC'S 2019 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On July 27, 2019, UHWC held its [2019 general assembly](#). Several senior PFLP members attended the event, including [Jamil Mizher](#) and [Kayed al Ghoul](#), both members of the PFLP's Political Bureau of the PFLP, [and Abu Nidal Toman](#) , a "member of the Central Committee of the PFLP."



Photo of Jamil Mizher (Source: Bisann, November 22, 2018: <https://www.bisann.ps/new/s/16156>)