AMBASSADOR

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
TEL AVIV

January 4, 2016

Professor G. M. Steinberg
President
NGO Monitor
1 Ben-Maimon Blvd.
Jerusalem, Israel 92262

Re: Australian Funding - Medical Aid for Palestinians

Dear Professor Steinberg

Thank you for your letter of 26 October outlining your concerns with Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP).

I can confirm that the Australian Government provided funding of AUD 99,972 under our Human Rights Small Grants Scheme (HRSGS) for a Medical Aid for Palestinians activity entitled "Strengthening the monitoring and reporting mechanisms for human rights violations of marginalised Bedouin communities in Area C". For your information, this project ended in April 2015.

As you will be aware, the Bedouin communities in the West Bank are amongst the poorest and most marginalised of Palestinians. Our support for MAP under the HRSGS reflects their proven engagement with these communities, particularly in relation to healthcare. Should we ever provide support for MAP in the future I can assure you we will ensure your report and the concerns raised therein are fully considered.

The Australian Government takes very seriously the issue of aid funds being diverted to fund terrorist activity. Our agreements with partners include specific clauses dealing with counter terrorism. Specifically, it is Australian Government policy to ensure that none of our funds are used, directly or indirectly, to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism. Our funding agreements with our partners, including Medical Aid for Palestinians, commit them to taking appropriate steps (related to due diligence re beneficiaries and partners, and

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transparency and accountability) to ensure our funding is not used to provide support to terrorist organisations and they are obligated to inform us immediately if they believe this to be the case.

I note your comments in respect of the Islah Charitable Society (ICS). As you may be aware, ICS is not a proscribed terrorist organisation in Australia, the United Kingdom, or the United States. If you have specific evidence that Australian aid funds have been diverted through ICS to a proscribed terrorist organisation we will act on this immediately.

Similarly, you may be aware that the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) is a registered NGO with the Government of Israel. The Government of Israel does not consider UAWC a terrorist entity and has registered the Jerusalem-based office of UAWC as a not-for-profit organisation since 1996. Again, UAWC is not a proscribed terrorist organisation in Australia, the United Kingdom or the United States. As above, the Australian Government will act immediately if there is specific evidence our funds have been misused.

The Australian Government does not support the BDS movement. It is a condition of Australian support to NGOs in the Palestinian Territories that no Australian funds are used to support BDS activities. We ensure our funding partners are well aware of this.

Thank you for bringing these matters to my attention. As a strong friend of Israel, I hope Australia's position on these issues is clear.

With my best personal wishes for 2016.

Yours sincerely

Dave Sharma

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