

NGO MONITOR

German Funding to Problematic UN Frameworks/ Agencies

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Introduction

NGO Monitor research and recent revelations regarding UNRWA have demonstrated that certain UN agencies operating in the West Bank and Gaza partner with, and even employ, terror-linked actors. This problem is compounded by a fundamental difference between the lists of terrorists maintained by the EU and the UN: EU-designated Palestinian terrorists groups – including Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – are not included on the United Nations Security Council Consolidated List, meaning that UN rules do not prevent engagement with these terror groups or their members.

This essential difference is fundamental with regard to German funding policy for UN agencies. As a major funder of UN-coordinated humanitarian activity in this region, Germany must implement measures to safeguard its aid and ensure that it is not diverted by terror-linked individuals or groups. The January 27, 2024 announcement by the German Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of a freeze in support for UNRWA is a first step, but subsequent developments are unclear. In addition, Germany continues to support other agencies that partner with terror-linked NGOs.

A January 2024 German Foreign Ministry statement outlined the country's support for UN and international partners in the area, stating that “Germany is the largest donor of humanitarian aid in the Palestinian territories” and “in 2023, Germany tripled its humanitarian assistance for Gaza to 203 million euro.” In that context, Germany pledged \$157.2 million in aid as part of OCHA's 2023-2024 “Flash Appeal” in response to the war that began with Hamas' brutal October 7th massacre. (For more details, see NGO Monitor's “Concerns about NGOs listed in UN OCHA-oPt's ‘Flash Appeal’ on ‘Hostilities in Gaza and Israel’”).

The statement listed “key partners” such as World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

As detailed below, the evidence demonstrates that UN recipients of German funding and a number of their NGO partners cooperate with and fund terror-linked entities.

UN Frameworks/Agencies

UNRWA

Funding

According to UNRWA, Germany provided \$202,054,285 in 2022, making it the agency's second largest donor.

Prior to the funding freeze, Germany had pledged an additional \$67 million.

Ties to terrorism and terror-linked NGOs

In January 2024, Israel alleged that at least 12 UNRWA employees participated in Hamas' October 7th atrocities against Israeli civilians, and asserted in March 2024 that "over 450 UNRWA employees are military operatives in terror groups in Gaza." Additionally, a January *Wall Street Journal* article, citing Israeli intelligence sources, reported that "23% of UNRWA's male employees had ties to Hamas, a higher percentage than the average of 15% for adult males in Gaza, indicating a higher politicization of the agency than the population at large." Furthermore, the PFLP and PIJ each have official unionized bodies of UNRWA employees.

Moreover, UNRWA's school curriculum incites violence and inculcates hatred of Jews. A March 2023 joint report by IMPACT-SE and UN Watch showed that "a sample of 82 UNRWA teachers and other staff affiliated with over 30 UNRWA schools who were involved in drafting, supervising, approving, printing, and distributing hateful content to students."

Similarly, a January 2024 UN Watch report revealed "A Telegram group of 3,000 UNRWA teachers in Gaza is replete with posts celebrating the Hamas massacre of October 7th minutes after it began, praising the murderers and rapists as 'heroes,' glorifying the 'education' the terrorists received, gleefully sharing photos of dead or captured Israelis and urging the execution of hostages.... UNRWA teachers regularly share videos, photos and messages inciting to Jihadi terrorism, and openly celebrating the Hamas massacre and rape of civilians."

UNRWA also partners with terror-linked NGOs that promote violence and anti-constitutional delegitimization of the Jewish State. For instance, UNRWA was an implementing partner on a 2021 project titled "Advocacy, monitoring and documentation of HR and IHL violations and related trends" with Al-Haq, Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), and Al-Mezan. All three have clear and multiple links to the PFLP, and in February 2024 BMZ reportedly decided to cease support to Al-Haq (as well as five other PFLP-linked NGOs).

Likewise, in November 2023, Switzerland announced an end to funding for PCHR, due to the NGO's problematic attitudes towards violence. (For instance, during the May 2023 Gaza conflict, PCHR published a statement in which it "affirms the Palestinian people to resist the occupation by all available means, including armed struggle...." After criticism and under pressure from donors – including the EU – this text was amended.)

(For more details on statements made by PCHR and Al-Haq officials supporting violence, see "Al-Haq's Extremist Demonization of Israel after the October 7 Pogrom," "Al-Haq Staff: Justifying Violence and glorifying terrorists," and "PCHR Board Members Call for Violence Against Israelis".)

OCHA's oPt Humanitarian Fund

Funding

In 2020-2023, Germany provided €69 million (39% of total contributions) to the oPt [occupied Palestinian territory] Humanitarian Fund, administered by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and disbursed to NGOs and UN agencies. In addition, in 2020-2023, Germany provided OCHA-oPt with \$3.2 million (14% of total contributions) for its operating budget.

Ties to terror-linked NGOs

The OCHA oPt Humanitarian Fund has provided grants to a number of terror-linked NGOs, including organizations banned by Israel over their ties to the PFLP links. These includes PCHR, Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), Al Awda Health and Community Association (formerly Union of Health Work Committees, UHWC), and Health Work Committees (HWC).

- UAWC and HWC are designated as terror entities by Israel due to their ties to the PFLP. The Israeli Ministry of Defense determined that these NGOs were diverting humanitarian funds from European donors to aid the PFLP. Moreover, officials from both NGOs are currently standing trial for their role in an August 2019 bombing that murdered Israeli 17-year-old, Rina Shnerb.
 - In 2019, two UAWC financial officers – Samir Arbid and Abdel Razeq Farraj – were arrested by Israel for their alleged role in the attacks. The PFLP claimed responsibility for the killing and praised Arbid for carrying it out.
 - Walid Hanatsheh served as HWC’s finance and administration manager at the time of his 2019 arrest. He was arrested in October 2019 and was identified by the Israeli security authorities as a senior PFLP terror operative. In this capacity, he was charged with commanding Samer Arbid. According to an Israeli media report, Hanatsheh also financed the August 23 bombing. The PFLP claimed responsibility for the killing and praised Hanatsheh.
 - On January 5, 2022, the Netherlands announced the cancellation of a contract with UAWC, citing its ties to the PFLP. A government-commissioned report by an independent investigatory company, confirmed that 34 UAWC employees in 2007-2020 had ties to the PFLP, some holding leadership positions in the terrorist group concurrent to their employment at UAWC.
 - Similarly, as noted above, in February 2024 BMZ reportedly decided to cease support to six PFLP-linked NGOs – including UAWC.

As of 2020, OCHA’s funding database is markedly less transparent than in the past, making it difficult to track the involvement of NGOs involved in OCHA projects. Often, these implementing partners are not listed. Though the lack of transparency makes it difficult to know the full scale of this phenomenon, the following are examples of terror-linked NGOs that receive funding through OCHA’s oPt Humanitarian Fund:

- In 2023, UAWC was a recipient of a \$351,730 grant for a project titled “Emergency support for affected vulnerable farmers through the rehabilitation of their agricultural facilities.”
- In 2021, PCHR was a recipient of a \$194,255 grant for “Advocacy, monitoring and documentation of HR and IHL violations and related trends in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.”
- In 2021, HWC was a recipient of a \$305,054 grant for increasing “Access to Essential Health Services for Marginalized Communities in Hebron H2.”

World Food Programme (WFP)

Funding

In 2021-2023, Germany provided WFP with \$59.25 million for projects in the West Bank and Gaza.

According to an October 2023 Federal Foreign Office statement, Germany allocated “an additional 18.7 million Euros [to] enable the UN World Food Programme to provide people in Gaza and in the West Bank with food.”

Ties to terror-linked NGOs

According to UN-OCHA’s FTS, several German-funded projects appear to be part of the Food Security Cluster, a mechanism jointly run by FAO and WFP.

In February 2024, the Food Security Cluster provided details on its \$445 million “Operational plan for the Gaza 30-Day Ceasefire,” whose target is “to assist 2.2 million people through various response modalities, including Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), in-kind distribution, blanket distribution, and parcels.” **UAWC is listed as one of the “participating organizations in this effort.”**

UNICEF

Funding

In 2023, Germany provided UNICEF with \$7.13 million for West Bank and Gaza operations.

According to an October 2023 Federal Foreign Office statement, “the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is being granted 5 million euro to help children and their families in Gaza, the West Bank and in East Jerusalem.”

Ties to terror-linked NGOs

UNICEF coordinates an NGO “working group” that includes terror-linked NGOs. Though UNICEF has reduced transparency in recent years, known members have included PCHR and Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCI-P), that latter designated by Israel over its ties to the PFLP and one of the PFLP-linked NGOs that BMZ will no longer support.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Funding

In 2020-2023, Germany provided UNDP with \$42.5 million (representing approximately 18% of total contributions) for several programs in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Due to limited transparency, it is not possible to independently evaluate the scope of funding and amounts directed to local NGO partners.

Ties to terror-linked NGOs

Despite the lack of transparency, NGO Monitor has identified at least two German-funded UNDP projects that involve terror linked NGOs:

1. In December 2019, PFLP-linked Red Crescent Society for the Gaza Strip (RCS4GS – since renamed Abdel Shafi Community Health Association) reported that it had signed a contract with UNDP for the construction of an additional floor in one of its facilities.

According to the NGO, the project was funded by the “Federal Republic of Germany” through the German development bank, KFW, though no further details about the funding were provided.

RCS4GS was founded and is directed by senior members of the PFLP. Several RCS4GS employees have demonstrated support for Palestinian terror groups and their activities. On multiple occasions, RCS4GS facilities, were used by the PFLP to hold their formal events.

For example, In February 2019, RCS4GS hosted 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.” Armed Militants of the PFLP’s Abu Ali Mustapha Brigades attended the event (see photos below).



Source: [PFLP website](#)



Source: <https://www.abuali.ps/index.php/news/2678>

2. According to UDNP, in 2021-2023, Germany provided it with \$1.2 million for “Support to Inclusive Electoral Process in the State of Palestine.” PFLP-linked Al-Haq was named as one of the implementing partners.

Recommendation

All German Federal agencies – including BMZ and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – must ensure that German-funded UN agencies do not support, partner with, employ members of, rely upon, or coordinate with terror-linked entities. This includes terrorist organizations that appear on the EU list of restrictive members – such as Hamas, PIJ, and the PFLP – and affiliated NGOs and institutions.