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# 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.

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## INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1985, [Health Work Committees](#) (HWC) [claims](#) it “works in a Rights-Based Approach providing Health Services and building development models to all segments of the Palestinian Population particularly the poor and the marginalized; and, lobbying and advocating in support of favorable policies and legislations for the realization of free democratic society and its citizens enjoying their social rights.”<sup>1</sup>

HWC is the West Bank and Jerusalem spinoff of [Union of Health Workers Committees](#) (UHWC), a Gaza-based NGO identified by Fatah as a PFLP “[affiliate](#)” and by [USAID-engaged audit](#) as “the PFLP’s health organization.” According to HWC, “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](#).” HWC is referred to by Viva Salud, one of its Belgian NGO partners, as UHWC’s “[sister organization](#).”

HWC uses demonizing language, including accusing Israel of “[genocide](#),” “[a racist apartheid system](#),” “[ethnic cleansing](#),” “[repeated targeting to the health center and its staff and patients](#),” and using “[poisonous gas](#).” HWC is also a [member](#) of the “BDS secretariat” and “[support\[s\] the international campaigns to boycott the occupation entity](#).”

## 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.

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<sup>1</sup> All translations (including Hebrew and Arabic) throughout the document by NGO Monitor.

[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

HWC's terror affiliation is antithetical to human rights norms and principles. Due to its affiliation with the PFLP, the provision of funds to HWC 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](#), HWC's total income was NIS 21.1 million; total expenses were NIS 22.4 million.
- HWC's [2018 Annual Report](#) lists a number of governmental and non-governmental "partners." However, HWC does not indicate if these are financial relationships.
- According to government sources, HWC receives funding from the Swedish, Belgian, and Spanish governments (specifically the Basque region).
- In 2017, Sweden (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; SIDA) pledged [\\$3.7 million](#) to HWC for a 2017-2020 “Reproductive health care program.” In 2017-2019, \$3.2 million had already been transferred to this program.
- In 2017-2019, the European Commission granted [€699,236](#) to five Palestinian NGOs, including HWC, as well as a Spanish group for a project “Strengthening Community Resilience and Social Cohesion in East Jerusalem on Both Sides of the Separation Wall.” Four of the Palestinian grantees, HWC, [Union of Palestinian Women Committees](#) (UPWC), [Defense for Children International – Palestine](#) (DCI-P), and Bisan Center for Research and Development (Bisan) have reported ties to the PFLP.
  - According to information released by donors, HWC received [€356,350.66](#) from the [European Commission](#) in 2014-2016.
- In 2017, HWC received \$109,756 from UNOCHA's “occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund” for [“Sustaining the Provision of Essential Health Services by Health Work Committees to the Most Vulnerable Communities in the south governorate of the West Bank.”](#)
- In 2014-2018, Spain (Basque region) provided HWC and its Spanish NGO partners with [€592,337](#) (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) for project details). In addition, in 2015-2018, the Basque region provided UPWC and its Spanish partner with [€800,764](#) for “strengthening community resistance and Palestinian social cohesion in east Jerusalem” as part of the [Kanan project](#), which is dedicated to strengthening “the social and political participation channels of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem through enhancing the capacity of the youth.” It is [implemented](#) by six

NGOs, including HWC, [UPWC](#), [DCI-P](#), [Alternative Information Center](#) (AIC), and Bisan. All have reported ties to the PFLP.

- In 2015-2018, Belgium (Directorate-General for Development Cooperation; DGD) provided [HWC](#) and its "sister organization" UHWC with [€605,714](#) via the Belgian NGO [Viva Salud](#) (formerly [Third World Health Aid](#)).
- In 2013-2015, DGD provided the Belgian NGO Oxfam Solidarité with [€813,052](#) for a project in partnership with HWC.
- In 2014, HWC and seven other NGOs received [€150,000](#) from the French BDS organization [Association France Palestine Solidarité](#) (AFPS).

## HWC'S ORGANIZATIONAL TIES TO THE PFLP

On June 9, 2015, Israel's Defense Minister [declared](#) that "the group of people or institutions or association known as the 'Union of Health Work Committees-Jerusalem'...or 'Health Work Committees'...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" (emphasis added, p.6489). In 2016, the Israeli High Court of Justice ([HCJ-3923/15](#)), stated that "based on credible information, the PFLP carried out activity in the apartment, under the aegis of an organization named the 'Union of Health Work Committees-Jerusalem,' which later was also declared a terrorist organization" (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](#)." The [Nidal Center](#) also houses HWC's [Kanan project](#), a program [implemented](#) by six political NGOs, five of which have reported ties to the PFLP.<sup>2</sup>

## HWC STAFF WITH TIES TO THE PFLP

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

### Waleed Hanatsheh

An [October 2019 HWC article](#) refers to Hanatsheh as its "Financial and Administrative director." According to the website of the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), in December 2019 [he was listed as a member of the board of directors](#), under the name Waleed Abu Ras.

- [According to Palestinian media reports, Israel arrested Waleed Hanatsheh](#) on October 3, 2019. According to his indictment, Hanatsheh was indicted on 14 counts in the Is-

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<sup>2</sup> The Kanan project NGO partners are [DCI-P](#), [Alternative Information Center \(AIC\)](#), [UPWC](#), Bisan, the Spanish NGO [Mundubat](#), and HWC.

raeli military court. His alleged crimes include:

- Membership in an illegal organization
  - Holding a position in an illegal organization
  - Possession of weapons, including assault rifles
  - Weapons trafficking
  - Multiple counts of premeditated attempts 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.
- According to Addameer, [Hanatsheh was arrested and placed in administrative detention by Israel between May 2002- December 2005, January 2009- January 2010, and November 2011-August 2012.](#)
  - In his answer to a 2012 parliamentary question at the Israeli Knesset, the Israeli Home Front Defense Minister Matan Vilnai (Labor) referred to the HWC “finance manager” as [“a senior activist in the PFLP terrorist organization... \[Who\] was involved prior to his arrest in activities that endanger the security of the region and the public.”](#)
  - In 2005, during Israeli High Court deliberations, Hanatsheh was defined as [“a senior activist in the PFLP.”](#) The Court further cites security sources indicating that “the status of the respondent [Hanatsheh] in the hierarchy and the risk that he will be integrated into a senior position in military activity in the PFLP is significant” [[HCJ 6845/05](#)] (emphasis added).



Health Work Committees - Palestine لجان العمل الصحي a ajouté

une photo.

4 août, 15:40 · 🌐



PFLP senior official Khalida Jarrar (right) standing next to Waleed Hanatsheh at HWC's 2019 General Assembly (Source: Health Work Committees – Palestine, Facebook, August 4, 2019: <https://www.facebook.com/131555640237401/photos/pcb.2466861403373468/2466842746708667/?type=3&theater>)

## Daoud Ghoul

Ghoul [previously served](#) as HWC's "[director of youth programs.](#)" HWC's 2014 annual report refers to him as the "[director of the development projects and programs in Jerusalem](#)"<sup>3</sup>

- Daoud Ghoul also worked in HWC's Nidal Center (see above) in "[managerial positions at the Nidal Center and in the \[HWC\] association.](#)"
- In 2016, Ghoul was convicted for his membership in the PFLP and was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.
  - According to a Jerusalem District Court verdict [67637-03-16], "at a date prior to 2006, the appellant [Daoud Ghoul] joined the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine organization, worked in management positions at the Nidal Centre, a place of activity for the organization [PFLP], and in the Union of Health Work Committees-Jerusalem [Health Work Committees]...the framework under which the organization [PFLP] began to operate after the Nidal Centre was closed in 2009. In that capacity, **the appellant organized - among other things- trips, extra-curricular activities and summer camps for youth- some of which were named for terrorists that were active in the organization- and organized visits to the families of fallen and incarcerated members of the organization**" (emphasis added).

## Dr. Ahmad Maslamani

According to the PFLP, Dr. Ahmad Maslamani was [co-founder and director of the Health Work Committees in the West Bank until his death.](#)

- According to the PFLP, Maslamani was a PFLP "[Central Committee member](#)" until his death in 2008. He "[helped to establish](#) the organization of the party [PFLP] in the city of Jerusalem...In addition, he founded a school where prisoners from the Popular Front are studying."
- According to a January 2013 PFLP article "Five years on: Remembering Comrade Dr. Ahmad Maslamani, struggler and healer of the Palestinian people," "[Comrade Ahmad was arrested by the occupation forces on numerous occasions, spending a total of seven years in Israeli detention and prisons.](#)" The [PFLP article also features](#) a note about Maslamani's death written by HWC's board of directors.
- According to a 2001 article in *Haaretz*, [Israel security force arrested Maslamani and two other PFLP members.](#) According to the article, Maslamani "[helped organizing and recruiting activists to the Popular Front \[PFLP\]. The two \[Maslamani and another PFLP member\] were responsible for a long series of terrorist attacks carried out by](#)



<sup>3</sup> As of [HWC's 2014 Annual Report](#).

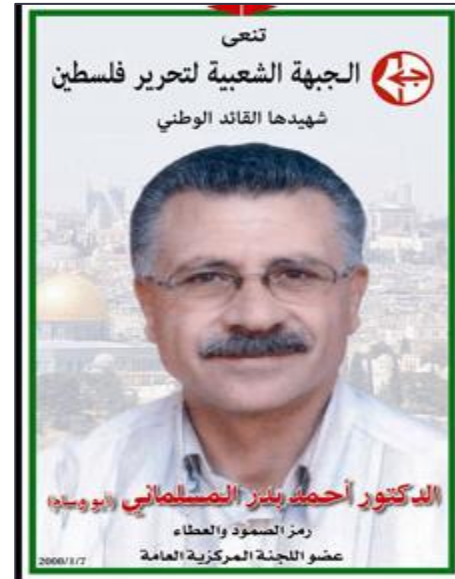
Popular Front [PFLP] operatives in Jerusalem."

- In 2002, Maslamani was convicted by an Israeli court "on the basis of his confession of the offense of membership in a terrorist organization." He served nine months in jail.

## Hassan Abed Al-Jawad

Hassan Abed Al-Jawad served as an HWC board member in 2014-2016.

- The PFLP refers to Al-Jawad as a "comrade."
- Palestinian media describes him as "a leader of the Popular Front [PFLP] in Bethlehem" and a "comrade."
- Al-Jawad also served as a DCI-P board member in 2012-2018. DCI-P similarly has close ties to the PFLP terror group (see NGO Monitor's report).
- In 2018, spoke at a PFLP event commemorating a PFLP member. According to Al Quds, Al-Jawad spoke "on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in which he said goodbye to the late fighter Farraj."
- In 2016, Al-Jawad "spoke on behalf of the PFLP" at an event commemorating a PFLP member who was killed "while engaging in a demonstration confronting the occupation forces with stones and Molotov cocktails."
- In a 2008 article in Palestinian media, Al-Jawad is referred to as "a leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine" in Bethlehem. In addition, a book published in 2005 titled *The Palestinian National Movement* refers to Abed al-Jawad as "a PFLP activist in Bethlehem."



PFLP mourning Maslamani. Source: PFLP, "Comrade Dr. Ahmad Maslamani: 6 years on the passing of a fighter and healer," January 2014: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190520063225/http://pflp.ps/english/2014/01/06/comrade-dr-ahmad-maslamani-5-years-on-the-passing-of-a-fighter-and-healer/>



Al-Jawad speaking on behalf of the PFLP (2016). Source: PFLP, "The Popular Front in Dhesheh Camp marks the First Anniversary of Martyr," October 13, 2016: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190520063645/http://pflp.ps/ar/post/14131>;



## Dr. Majed Nassar

Dr. Majed Nassar previously served as HWC's [Executive Director](#) and [Deputy Director](#).

- The British paper the *Independent* referred to him as [a PFLP member](#).
- Nassar is also a [former board member of the PFLP linked NGO DCI-P in at least 2007-2009](#).
- According to a 2007 document edited by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Jerusalem, Israel has [prevented](#) Dr. Majed Nassar from traveling "since 2001," a decision upheld by the High Court.
- Nassar co-wrote *The Palestinian Intifada: Cry Freedom*, [a book](#) that praises the Palestinian terror campaign of the early 2000s.
  - "The Palestinian resistance movement has therefore concluded that every checkpoint, every soldier and every settler are legitimate targets in the struggle for freedom and independence, thus rendering all theories and strategies of supremacy irrelevant. In essence then, everything becomes a target: Jerusalem, Haifa, Hadera, Tel Aviv, Ashkelon, the settlements, the checkpoints, the military installations and even the Israeli Ministry of Defense" (page 94).
  - "No Palestinian accepts that the political parties that have struggled over the last fifty years should be regarded as 'terrorist organizations,' simply because their cause of liberation is anathema to the United States and its stepchild, Israel" (page 117) .

## Ismat Shakhshir

Ismat Shakhshir is reported to be a former HWC "[member of the director committee](#)."<sup>iv</sup> She also attended the [2018 HWC general assembly](#).

- Shakhshir ran "[for the PLC \[Palestinian Legislative Council\] seat at the 2006 election representing the PFLP but did not pass](#)."
- Shakhshir is also a [member](#)<sup>v</sup> / [official](#)<sup>vi</sup> of the PFLP "[affiliate](#)" Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC).
- According to an "[All 4 Palestine](#)" article, she is also a board member of the [Union of Health Work Committees](#), an organization with ties to the PFLP.
- In 2019, Shakhshir participated in a



UPWC and Progressive Student Action Front Ceremony with banner of Leila Khaled (Source: PFLP, "[The Student Action Front and the Union of Women's Committees honor the active and successful student](#)," March 11, 2019)

<sup>iv</sup> According to [a CV last modified in 2008](#).

<sup>v</sup> As of an October 2018 post on "[Coordinadoro Extremena De Organizaciones No Gubernamentales Para El Desarrollo](#)" website and a [November 2017 UPWC Facebook post](#).

<sup>vi</sup> According to an [October 2019 article](#) in Arabic language media.

ceremony [co-organized by UPWC and the Progressive Student Action Front](#), "[the student organization of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#)," in honor of the International Women's Day.

- The banner for the ceremony featured logos of UPWC, the Progressive Student Action Front, and the PFLP terrorist and plane hijacker Leila Khaled.
- In 2017, Shakhshir participated in a workshop, "[The boycott of Israeli goods and its impact on the normalization](#)," co-organized by UPWC and the Progressive Student Action Front.
- In 2015, Shakhshir participated in a seminar "[Detention experiences and human rights during detention, interrogation and trial](#)" co-organized by UPWC, the Progressive Student Action Front, and [Addameer](#) – an organization identified by Fatah as an official PFLP "[affiliate](#)."



Photo of Ismat Shakhshir during the ceremony in honor of the International Women's Day. (Source: PFLP, "[The Student Action Front and the Union of Women's Committees honor the active and successful student](#)," March 11, 2019)



Photo of Ismat Shakhshir during a workshop "[The boycott of Israeli goods and its impact on the normalization](#)" (Source: Union of Palestinian Women's Committees Federation, Facebook, November 28, 2017)



Photo of Ismat Shakhshir during a workshop "[Detention experiences and human rights during detention, interrogation and trial](#)" (Source: Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, Facebook, April 21, 2015)

## Yousef Habash

Reportedly HWC's "[European representative](#)," until at least 2015.<sup>vii</sup>

- Also serves also as an [Addameer board member \(until at least May 2018\)](#) and is [apparently the nephew of PFLP founder George Habash](#). Israel [prevented](#) Habash from leaving the West Bank in [2011-2012](#). He is also a member of the [BDS National Committee](#).
- [According to the PFLP](#), Habash participated in the "World Social Forum" in Tunisia in March 2015 and is a member of the "Forum's international coordinating committee and a representative of the Palestinian national committee for the Forum."
- In 2001, an article posted on the Palestinian NGO Miftah's website, written by the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), includes Habash in a list of "[PFLP members \(or ex-associates of the PFLP\)](#)" arrested by the Palestinian National Authority following the assassination of the Israeli Minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

## OTHER PFLP MEMBERS IN HWC'S CIRCLE

### Khalida Jarrar

Khalida Jarrar attended the [2019](#) and [2016 general assembly](#) of HWC. She also served as [vice-chairperson](#) of Addameer until 2017<sup>viii</sup> She is also seen [being interviewed at Addameer's offices in a 2019 video](#).

- Jarrar was arrested on October 31, 2019 on suspicions of "[involvement in terror activity](#)." On December 18, 2019, it was revealed that Jarrar has "[emerged as the head of the PFLP in the West Bank and responsible for all the organization's activities](#)" (emphasis added). According to her indictment:
  - Jarrar was indicted on one count of holding a position in an illegal organization, dating back to June 2016.
  - The indictment discusses how she and two other individuals arrested for their alleged involvement in the PFLP-terror cell that killed a 17-year old Israeli girl Rina Schnerb divided their responsibilities. The two others are Walid Hanatsheh (who works as [the financial and administrative director](#) at HWC), and Abdul Razeq Farraj ([administrative manager](#) at the PFLP-tied Union of Agricultural Work Committees). The indictment explains that Jarrar was responsible for political and national activities, and Farraj for organizational development and recruitment.
  - Jarrar was kept abreast of the work of her colleagues. The trio had multiple meetings in which they updated each other on their activities, dating back to 2014.
- According to Addameer, Jarrar was [arrested](#) in July 2017 and placed in administrative detention. According to Addameer, her detention was extended multiple times until [she was released on February 28, 2019](#).
- Jarrar was administratively detained on April 1, 2015 by Israeli security forces and on April 15, 2015 she was indicted for [various offenses including active membership in a](#)

<sup>vii</sup> According to a [May 2015 article on Euromed-France's website](#).

<sup>viii</sup> NGO Monitor has on file documented statements from the PFLP's West Bank and Gaza branch, as well as from its branch in Syria, that refer to Jarrar as a member of the organization's political bureau from at least [2012-2019](#)

[terrorist organization](#) (the PFLP) and inciting violence through a call to kidnap Israeli soldiers to be used as “bargaining chips for the release of Palestinian prisoners.”

- [Jarrar accepted a plea bargain](#) and was reportedly convicted on “one count of belonging to an illegal organization and another of incitement” receiving a 15- month prison sentence with an additional 10-month suspended sentence. According to an article in *Haaretz*, “The court noted that Jarrar was not being tried for being a member of the Palestinian parliament but rather for [her activity in the PFLP](#).”



Poster of Jarrar with the PFLP flag. Source: Alnahdanews, “The Fighting Khalida Jarrar Embraces the Space of Palestinian Freedom,” February 28, 2019:

<https://alnahdanews.com/news/2019/02/28/1584/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B6%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82-%D9%81%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9>

## Mahmoud Jiddah

Mahmoud Jiddah attended the [2017 HWC general assembly](#).

- A [member](#) of the PFLP-linked NGO Addameer’s Board of Directors and served as a DCI-P board member from at least [2012](#) through [2016](#). DCI-P also has numerous other staff and board members connected to the PFLP.
- Jiddah was imprisoned by Israel for [17 years](#) in 1968 for carrying out grenade attacks against Israeli civilians in Jerusalem in 1968.
- According to [news reports](#), Didier Ortiz, then a Green Party candidate for the Fort Lauderdale City Council, posted an Instagram photo of Jiddah following a 2016 meeting between the two, citing the latter’s PFLP affiliation.