

Federal Councilor, Mr. Didier Burkhalter,  
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,  
Bern, Switzerland

1, June 2017

Dear Mr. Burkhalter,

Switzerland is one of four donor countries contributing to the Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Secretariat (Secretariat), a funding mechanism that has disbursed grants to a number of Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that incite violence, promote antisemitism, and/or have ties to terrorist organizations.

Recent developments have brought the issue of Secretariat funding to the fore.

In May 2017, a Secretariat-funded NGO, [Women's Affairs Technical Committee](#) (WATC), inaugurated a youth center for girls in the town of Burqa, near Nablus. The center is [named](#) after Dalal Mughrabi, a terrorist who in 1978 murdered 37 civilians, including 12 children. WATC's logo is prominently featured on the center's building. While Norway and the United Nations have both withdrawn their support and demanded their logos be removed, WATC has not done so to date.

It is important to add in this context that Norway briefly [joined](#) the Secretariat in the second half of 2016, before withdrawing.

Similarly, Denmark has ordered a thorough review of grantee activities in order to ensure funding is not allocated to groups that incite hatred and violence.

Indeed, WATC is not the only instance of Secretariat funding to organizations that glorify terrorism or employ violent rhetoric. The Palestinian organization [Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling](#) (WCLAC) received \$710,000 in core funding from the Secretariat. [WCLAC fieldworker](#) Manal Tamimi [tweeted](#) (August 1, 2015), "I do hate Israel ,i (sic) wish a thrid Intefada (sic) coming soon and people rais (sic) up and kills all these zionist settlers everywhere." In September 2015, on Yom Kippur (a fast day and the holiest day of the year in the Jewish calendar), Tamimi [tweeted](#): "Vampire zionist celebrating their Kebore day by drinking Palestinian bloods, yes our blood is pure & delicious but it will kill u at the end."

Far from condemning her actions, WCLAC [filed a complaint](#) to the United Nations over the "Frequent targeting of Palestinian human rights defender: Mrs. Manal Tamimi."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Following a [complaint](#) filed by NGO Monitor to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding Tamimi's virulently antisemitic and violent rhetoric, the Office of the High Commissioner removed her from a UN report that had listed her as a "human rights defender".

Switzerland has already begun addressing this important issue. On March 8, 2017, the [Swiss Parliament voted](#) (111 to 78 with 4 abstentions) to “amend the laws, ordinances and regulations so that Switzerland can no longer subsidize, even indirectly, development cooperation projects carried out by NGOs involved in racist, antisemitic or hate incitement actions, or in BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) campaigns.” The bill moves to the Swiss Council of States for a June vote.

We urge Switzerland to follow through with this initiative and to follow Denmark’s example in reviewing the activities of Secretariat grantees, so as to prevent further Swiss funding to such organizations.

Sincerely,

Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg  
President

Olga Deutsch  
Europe Desk Director

CC: H.E. Andreas Baum, Swiss Ambassador to Israel