

To: jeevacation@gmail.com[jeevacation@gmail.com];
jeevacation@gmail.com[jeevacation@gmail.com]
From: PMW Bulletin [REDACTED] on behalf of PMW Bulletin
Sent: Wed 9/3/2014 3:13:54 PM
Subject: Abbas enacts ploy to deceive donor countries



Bulletin
Sept. 3, 2014

Abbas enacts ploy to deceive donor countries

Abbas' Presidential decree changes PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs to PLO Authority of Prisoners' Affairs

***Now the PA won't be using US and EU money
directly to pay salaries to terrorist prisoners,
but will use US and EU money indirectly to pay
terrorist prisoners, by channeling it through the PLO***

Minister Karake:

**"[Due to PA's payment of salaries to prisoners]
there was [international] pressure
and a kind of war, an intense war,
and monetary and financial threats towards the PA"
[Ajyal radio (independent Palestinian station), Aug. 30, 2014]**

PA Government Spokesman:

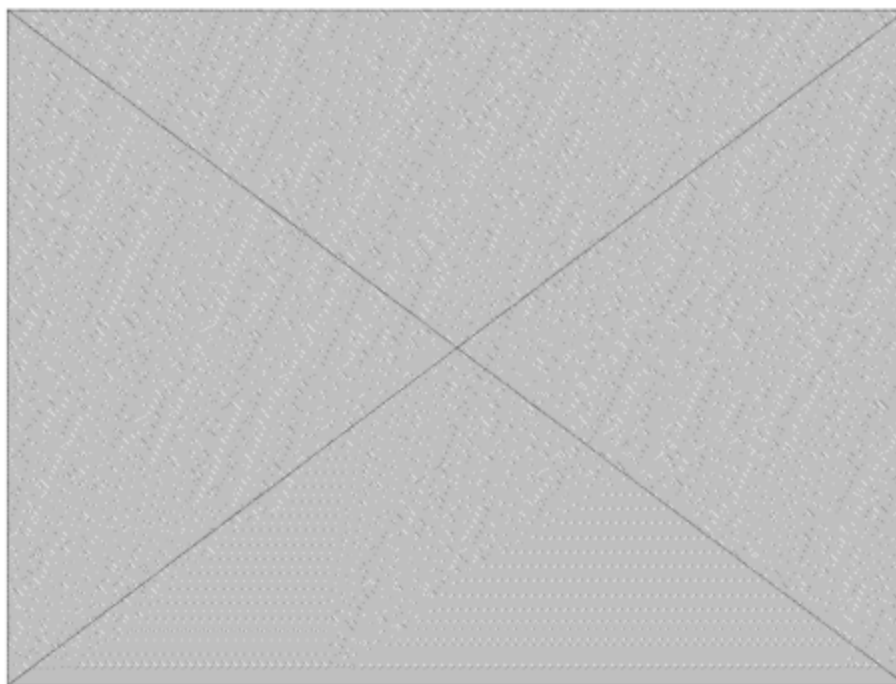
**"[The change] will provide
political and legal cover for this issue.
It eliminates the many arguments
made by many parties, who always try to say**

**that [foreign] aid money [to the PA]
is going to the prisoners"**

[Official PA TV, June 5, 2014]

http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=12534

by Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik



The Palestinian Authority's policy of paying salaries to imprisoned terrorists - on which it spent more than 100 million dollars last year - has led to extreme international pressure from donor countries to stop rewarding terrorists.

[Palestinian Media Watch](#) first exposed this PA practice in 2011 and has since repeatedly documented for the international community the extent of these payments.

US Congress, as well as the Parliaments of Holland, Norway, Britain and others have all demanded the PA cease paying terrorist salaries. (See donor countries' statements and legislation below).

But the PA has come up with a scheme to evade the pressure, criticism and demands of their donors. It will not stop funding terrorist prisoners as the EU and the US have demanded, but it will change the name of the institution that oversees these payments:

By presidential decree, Abbas has changed the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, subordinate to the PA government, into the Supreme National Authority of Prisoners' Affairs, subordinate to the PLO. Instead of paying terrorist salaries directly out of the PA general budget, to which international donors send their funding, the PA will now channel the money through the new PLO institution,

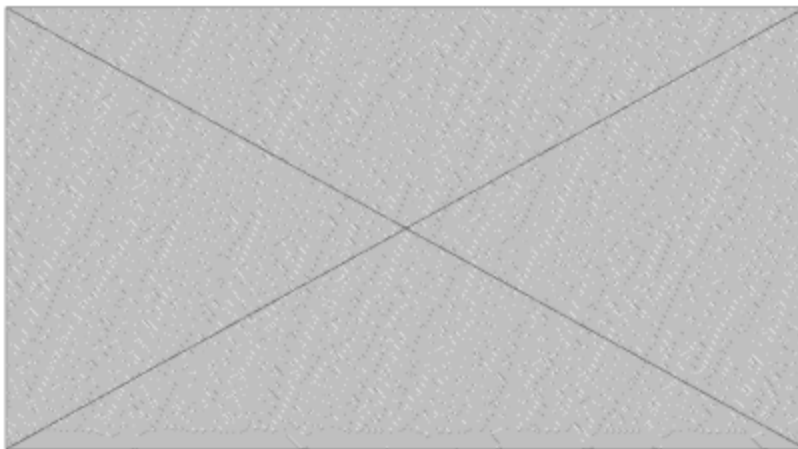
which will be responsible for prisoners' affairs. Since the PLO does not receive EU and US funding, the PA seems to expect that international donors will no longer criticize its payments to terrorists.

However, nothing really has changed except the name of the institution, and PA Chairman Abbas has announced that he will remain in control of the payments as before. The official PA daily reported that the new Authority "will be subordinate to the PLO and supervised by it and by the Palestinian presidency." [Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Sept. 3, 2014] Abbas has even appointed the same minister who formerly oversaw the payment of prisoners' salaries under the PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs to serve in the same capacity, only now as head of the new PLO Authority. Abbas has again given Issa Karake, his former Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, "the rank of minister" in his new position as head of the Authority of Prisoners' Affairs. [PNN Palestine News Network (independent Palestinian news agency), Aug. 29, 2014]

This week, newly-appointed Minister Karake affirmed that nothing will change under the new Authority, and the same "services," i.e., payments and other benefits to the prisoners, will continue:

"The Palestinian leadership, President Mahmoud Abbas and the members of the [PLO's] Executive Committee confirmed that this change would in no way affect the importance and significance of the prisoners' issue, neither in terms of politics and the struggle nor in terms of the services [provided to the prisoners]."

[Ajyal radio (independent Palestinian radio station), Aug. 30, 2014]



As early as June this year, PMW reported on this PA ploy, which was confirmed by PA government spokesman Ehab Bessaio. He openly explained that the change from "Ministry" to "Authority" was to "provide political and legal cover" and "eliminate arguments... that [foreign] aid money [to the PA] is going to the prisoners." [Official PA TV, June 5, 2014]

The PA seeks to deceive its international donors by hiding the monthly payment of 27 million shekels, roughly \$100 million annually to terrorists - a sum, which

the PA has announced will be raised to nearly \$150 million (\$46 million additional) this year - under the heading of the PLO. As the money will be paid through the PLO, instead of directly out of the PA general budget, the PA is pretending to accommodate demands to stop PA payments to terrorists.

Time will tell if the US and the EU, knowing that Abbas has arranged to continue giving \$150 million a year to terrorists, will allow themselves to be deceived and continue funding the PA's terrorist reward program.

PMW documentation of the PA's salary rewards to terrorists has led to legislative action in many countries.

In June 2014, 148 of 150 members of Dutch Parliament voted to adopt a motion that the Dutch government and the EU must demand that the PA stop these salaries, which "result in a negative incentive as crime and terrorism are rewarded" [The Dutch House of Representatives, Motie 23432-376, July 3, 2014].

The US Congress is considering a number of legislative proposals to either completely cut funding to the PA or deduct the same amount the PA gives to terrorists from President Obama's funding request for the PA.

Norway and Britain have also debated this issue in parliament and each has asked the PA for explanations. Other countries, including Denmark, have debated this PA practice as well.

Since 2011, PMW has released a number of reports on PA terrorist salaries. Last year, one report documented that the PA was lying to European donor countries in order to ensure the continuance of European funding of the terrorist salaries.

Click to view more PA statements and news reports regarding the PA's payment of salaries to terrorists.

The following are longer excerpts of the reports on the new PLO Supreme National Authority of Prisoners' Affairs, established by Abbas' Presidential decree:

Minister of Authority of Prisoners' Affairs confirms in radio interview the PA ploy to deceive international donors and continue paying terrorist salaries:

Minister of the Supreme National Authority of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake: "[Incorporating the Authority of Prisoners' Affairs] into the PLO may give [the prisoners' issue] new power and new momentum, even with the relations with the international community and with several parties that have attempted to exert pressure on the PA in recent years, claiming that the Palestinian government has been allocating some of its funds for the

prisoners' families. This is a result of Israeli pressure and Israeli propaganda, [which claims] these funds are being earmarked - of course, according to the claim of the Israelis and some countries - for the benefit of the families of the prisoners, whom they accuse of terrorism. There has been a lot of pressure. This issue must not be abandoned. It must not be subjected to the stipulations [of the international community] and the Israeli pressure. It [the Ministry] had to be incorporated into the PLO, as an issue of national liberation, an issue that concerns all Palestinian forces and factions... I believe this was one of the main considerations behind the decision to turn the Ministry [of Prisoners' Affairs] into an authority..."

Interviewer: "Would you say this formal change, in quotation marks, was done or devised to avoid international pressure, which Israel pushed for?"

Karake: "[That's] one of the reasons, yes. We're speaking honestly. There was [international] pressure and a kind of war, an intense war, and monetary and financial threats towards the PA. The Palestinian leadership was subject to real pressure, but of course it refused to submit to all this pressure. We told them [international donors] it was a matter of freedom, a matter of fighter-prisoners, a matter of a national liberation movement, and so the idea that it would be part of the PLO was conceived. I always say that the prisoners' issue is a national, legal and moral issue, which no one can bypass, minimize, limit or marginalize by any means, because, if we abandon this issue, we abandon the identity of the national struggle, which is represented by and embodied by the prisoners in the occupation prisons, who fought this occupation and resisted it for the liberty of their land."

Interviewer: "At first, when the suggestion to turn the Ministry into an authority was made, you opposed it. What's changed today?"

Karake: "Yes, there was a long discussion. We were all worried and concerned about this change, which is why there was a long discussion. The Palestinian leadership, President Abbas and the members of the [PLO's] Executive Committee confirmed that this change would in no way affect the importance and significance of the prisoners' issue, neither in terms of politics and the struggle nor in terms of the services [provided to the prisoners]. There have been extensive clarifications, the President [Abbas] and the Palestinian leadership have guaranteed and reassured that the prisoners' issue is a red line."

[Ajyal radio (independent Palestinian station), Aug. 30, 2014]

"In its meeting yesterday [Sept. 2, 2014], the [PA] government appointed former [PA] Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake head of the Authority of Prisoners' Affairs, and revoked Minister Shawqi Issa's appointment to this position... (When the Fatah-Hamas unity government was formed in June 2014, Shawqi Issa became Minister of Prisoners' Affairs instead of Issa

Karake -Ed.)

[Subheadline] Karake Appointed Head of [Authority] for Prisoners' Affairs: The government has approved the revoking of its decision to appoint Minister Shawqi Issa supervisor of the Ministry of Prisoners' and Released Prisoners' Affairs, based on the presidential decree published on the matter, which states that it [the Ministry] is to be transformed from a ministry subordinate to the Palestinian government into a Supreme National Authority of Prisoners' and Released Prisoners' Affairs, subordinate to the PLO and supervised by it and by the Palestinian presidency. The decree also states that Issa Karake, the former Minister of Prisoners' and Released Prisoners' Affairs, is to be appointed head of this authority."

[Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Sept. 3, 2014]

Headline: "Presidential decree turned Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs into National Authority and appointed Karake Minister of [the Authority]" "Palestine News Network [PNN] has learned that President Mahmoud Abbas has published a presidential decree which will turn the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners' and Released Prisoners' Affairs from a ministry that is subordinate to the Palestinian government into a Supreme National Authority of Prisoners' and Released Prisoners' Affairs, which will be subordinate to the PLO and supervised by it and by the Palestinian presidency.

In addition, the decree appointed Issa Karake to head this authority, in the rank of minister.

Minister Karake will receive the responsibility of managing this authority, which will supervise and take care of the prisoners' issues in the various districts of the homeland."

[PNN Palestine News Network (independent Palestinian news agency), Aug. 29, 2014]

"Following the publication of the presidential decree transforming the [PA] Ministry of Prisoners' [Affairs] into an authority, an official ceremony was held yesterday [Sept. 2, 2014] to transfer [the ministry portfolio] from former Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Shawqi Issa to the [new] head of the [Supreme National] Authority [of Prisoners' Affairs], Minister Issa Karake, who was appointed by the President [Mahmoud Abbas]. [Former Minister Shawqi] Issa emphasized the need for extensive cooperation under all circumstances and [at all] times, because the prisoners' issue is on the leadership's agenda. He also emphasized that all efforts must be concentrated in this direction.

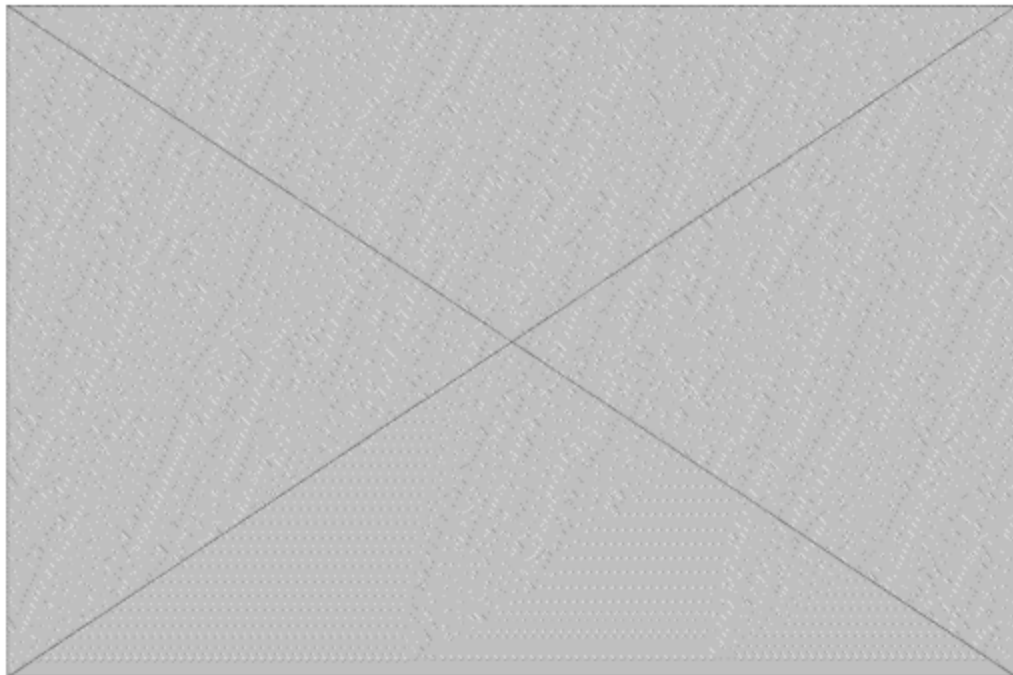
The head of the authority, Issa Karake, thanked Minister Issa for the efforts he has invested and continues to invest, and expressed his hope that things would progress smoothly, given that the authority must become established and organized - [a process] which will take some time."

[Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Sept. 3,

2014]

"Congratulations to the Head of the Authority of Prisoners' and Released Prisoners' Affairs, Minister Issa Karake
Journalist Hakam Jum'a Al-Kharraz and the Al-Kharraz family in Tubas and Nablus congratulate Minister Issa Karake on the great faith President Abbas, may Allah protect him, has placed in him by appointing him head of the Authority of Prisoners' and Released Prisoners' Affairs.
May Allah grant you success in serving the people of your homeland in supporting the prisoners' and released prisoners' issue. We wish our brave prisoners a swift release from the occupation prisons and [we wish] for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital."

[Al-Ayyam, Aug. 31, 2014]



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