

---

# PFLP-linked NGOs Whitewash Terror in COI

## Submission

February 21, 2023

On February 2, 2023, three European-funded Palestinian NGOs with clearly documented links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist organization –[Addameer](#),[Al-Haq](#), and [Al-Mezan](#)– published a [submission to the UN Human Rights Council](#) (HRC)’s permanent “Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel” (COI).<sup>1</sup> The document again accuses Israel of “Policies to Maintain and Entrench its Settler-Colonial Apartheid Regime: Violent Suppression of Demonstrations and Ensuing Wilful Killing and Injuries, Arbitrary Detention, Torture, and Smear and Delegitimation Campaigns against Human Rights Defenders and Organisations.”

In their submission, in addition to the false accusations regarding Israel, the NGOs whitewash acts of violence by Palestinians, omitting core evidence linking Palestinians to the terror and terrorist organizations that maintain the conflict.

The following analysis provides key information omitted by these NGOs, highlighting their lack of credibility and misleading presentation. If the commissioners were genuinely motivated to independently investigate, as they claim, the COI would conduct a serious and independent investigation into the incidents, and not merely copy and paste reports from its ideological NGO allies.

## European-funding

- Since 2021,[Al-Haq](#) has received funding from the EU, France, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Norway, and Sweden.
- Since 2021,[Al-Mezan](#) has received funding from the EU, the Netherlands, Sweden
- Since 2021,[Addameer](#) has received funding from Ireland and from various local governments in Spain.

## Death of Said Odeh

The NGO submission states that 16 year-old Said Yousef Mohammed Odeh was shot by IDF forces when “Palestinian protesters, who threw <sup>1</sup>stones at the IOF [Israeli Occupation Forces],

were met with Israeli excessive use of force, including the firing of tear gas canisters, and live ammunition.”

In contrast, according to the IDF, [Odeh](#) was shot dead by Israeli forces responding to “[a number of suspects \[who\] hurled firebombs at troops,](#)” near Beita, on May 5, 2021.



[Source](#)

The NGO submission makes no mention of firebombs, nor does it indicate Odeh’s apparent access to weapons – as seen in this picture posted on Facebook. The NGOs, obscuring this essential evidence, instead used an innocuous image of Odeh to erase the reality.

## **Death of Razan Al-Najjar**

The NGOs repeat the unfounded claim that a 21-year-old female medical volunteer, Razan Najjar, was intentionally killed by an Israeli sniper during the violence along the Gaza border with Israel. In contrast, many sources examining the incident, including in an extensive [New York Times article](#), concluded that Najjar was accidentally killed by shrapnel from a ricocheting bullet.

## **Death of Sajed Mizher**

In the submission, Sajed Mizher is characterized as a “Palestinian paramedic,” killed in clashes near Bethlehem.

Unmentioned by the NGOs is the fact that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist organization published a statement labeling Mizher as a “[comrade](#).” Mizher’s funeral procession featured many individuals wearing military gear, PFLP paraphernalia, and PFLP banners and his body was also adorned in PFLP paraphernalia, furthering indicating his membership in the terror group.

## **PLC members**

According to the submission, “By the end of 2022, five PLC [Palestinian Legislative Council] members continue to be arbitrarily held in Israeli prisons, including Marwan Barghouti, Ahmad Sa’adat, and Hassan Yousef, in addition to Mohammad Abu Teir and Nasser Abdul Jawad, who are held under administrative detention.”

Again, the NGOs omit key details about these figures:

- Marwan Barghouti was convicted in 2004 for his role as a ringleader in a string of terror attacks on Israeli civilians, resulting in at least five murders.
- Ahmad Sa’adat is the Secretary-General of the PFLP; responsible for the assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister, Rehavam Ze’evi.”
- Hassan Yousef is a Hamas co-founder.
- Abu Teir and Abdul-Jawad are also Hamas members.

## **Arrest of Khalida Jarrar**

According to these PFLP-linked NGOs, Khalida Jarrar’s detentions and conviction reflect “arbitrary detention of Palestinian civil society and political leaders.”

The NGOs ignore key portions of Jarrar’s March 2021 conviction (on file with NGO Monitor), such as the fact that she served in a senior position in the PFLP, and that she held coordination meetings with PFLP leaders responsible for terror operations in the West Bank.

## **Arrest of Juana Rishmawi**

The submission lists Rishmawi as a “human rights defender,” arrested by Israel “to justify their arbitrary criminalisation of Palestinian civil society.”

Juana Rishmawi, who served as a fundraiser for HWC, was arrested by Israel in April 2021. In [November 2021 she agreed to a plea bargain agreement.](#)

The plea bargain acknowledged that the HWC is “controlled by the PFLP” and was involved in “raising funds for the PFLP’s activities, financing PFLP activities and carrying out PFLP’s activities.” The charge sheet to which she pled guilty states, “Over the years and in the period beginning at least in 2006 to September 2019, the organization worked systematically to fraudulently receive donations from said countries [UK, EU, Denmark, Switzerland, and Belgium] in order to increase the organization’s revenues and thus fund the activity of the PFLP and strengthen the PFLP status in the region and its infrastructure.”

## **Arrest of Bashir Khairi**

The submission to the COI labeled Bashir Khairi’s arrest proof of an Israeli plot “to more broadly criminalise entire Palestinian CSOs.”

Al-Khairi’s known PFLP links include appearing on the PFLP list for the scheduled May 2021 Palestinian Legislative Elections, which were postponed indefinitely.

Notably, in statements in 2012 and 2014, the PFLP referred to Al-Khairi as an “historic leader,” a “comrade,” and a “leader.”

## **Arrest of Shatha Odeh**

Following her July 7, 2021 arrest, in May 2022, Odeh [pled guilty](#) to crimes including holding a position in a banned organization, presence in the proceedings of a banned organization, and improperly transferring funds for her role in raising funds for the organization after it was declared a terrorist entity by the IDF in January 2020.

She was sentenced to 16-months in prison and a 5-year suspended sentence, but was [released in June 2022](#), after serving nearly a year in prison.

In January 2020, in response to EU anti-terror regulations governing grant agreements with NGOs that prohibit relationships between grantees and Palestinian terrorist groups, Odeh stated, “We disagree with the European Union on the list... which includes seven political organizations and classifies them as ‘terrorists.’ For us,

they are national liberation movements.”

## Arrest of Khitam Sa’afin

In a [July 2017 statement published by the PFLP](#), the terrorist organization “confirmed that the Zionist occupation forces launched a pre-dawn campaign of raids...arresting a number of leaders and activists of the Front,” including “Khitam Saafin.”

In February 2022, she was [sentenced to 15-months in prison](#) after being [convicted of membership in the PFLP](#).

In their submission, the NGOs respond to her conviction due to membership in a terrorist organization by calling the PFLP a “political party”: “The criminalisation of mere membership in or affiliation with a political party violates fundamental international conventions that ensure such activities are protected under the freedoms of belief and association...Such attacks and harassment are part of the Israel’s [sic] aim to silence those who defend and express their opposition to the Israeli apartheid and illegal policies, at the foremost Palestinian human rights defenders.”

## Arrest of Mohammad el-Halabi

On June 15, 2022, Mohammad El-Halabi was [convicted](#) in the Beersheva District Court for diverting funds and materials to Hamas for terror purposes. At the time of his arrest in 2016, El-Halabi was the head of the Gaza office of World Vision – an international, church-based aid organization.

El-Halabi was convicted of:

- Contact with a foreign agent
- Membership in a terror organization: “The defendant took an active and significant part in the activities of Hamas and assisted Hamas over the years in a variety of ways, including transferring monies and equipment that he knew would be used to fund terrorism and assisting terrorists, as detailed in the indictment. The defendant even participated in military actions such as marking exit points for tunnel openings on the Israeli side of the Erez Crossing...”
- Illegal use of property for terror purposes
- Providing information to the enemy

- Illegal military training
- Possession of weapons and ammunition

Notably, in 2015, a Gaza-based accountant for World Vision informed his employers that he suspected El-Halabi of diverting funds to assist Hamas. He was fired and then interrogated by Hamas. Damningly, El-Halabi had a copy of the interrogation on his personal computer.

The NGOs repeat World Vision’s unsupported version of events, claiming that Israel’s assertion that El-Halabi had diverted approximately \$50 million in World Vision funds to Hamas exceeded the NGO’s \$22.5 million cumulative operating budget. [NGO Monitor research](#), however, demonstrates that World Vision Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza had an operating budget of over \$130 million for the years in question. Notably, in January 2023, the Jerusalem District Court approved a request from the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits to disband the Israeli World Vision branch, due to [concerns of terror financing and financial mismanagement](#).

## Deportation of Salah Hamouri

The PFLP [identified Hamouri as a member in September 2022](#), as well as labeling him a “comrade” in October 2011. The submission makes no mention of his PFLP membership.

Notably, in its similar January 3 submission to the COI, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) failed to note [Hamouri’s 2005 conviction for plotting to assassinate](#) former Israeli Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

## Footnotes

1. On January 3, another PFLP-linked NGO, [Palestinian Centre for Human Rights \(PCHR\)](#), [made a similar submission](#).

## Topics in this Report

- 2021 UN Commission of Inquiry
- Terrorism
- UN Human Rights Council (HRC)

## **NGOs in this Report**

- Al-Haq
- Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights
- Addameer

Source: <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/pflp-linked-ngos-whitewash-terror-in-coi-submission/>