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4 August 2020

Dear Mr van Leeuwen,

**Re: Donations by State of the Netherlands to the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)**

Thank you for your letter dated 20 July 2020, and for re-sending the letter dated 19 June 2019. Your 2019 letter unfortunately did not contain responses to the questions we had put in our original letter of 13 May 2019 (the First Letter).

We enclose with this letter an updated report on the links between UAWC and the PFLP dated 4 August 2020.

**UKLFI letters dated 19 June 2019 (the First Letter) and 18 June 2020 (the Second Letter)**

You say that our letters “*describe a possible link between UAWC and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) based on the arrest of two former UAWC employees on suspicion of involvement in a terrorist attack on 23 August 2019*”.

This is an incorrect analysis of our letters and the extensive report on the links between UAWC and the PFLP that we sent you with the Second Letter.

Our First Letter described the terrorist designations of the PFLP, some of its recent atrocities, and also highlighted the many organisational and institutional links between UAWC and the PFLP. We also pointed to evidence relating to several of the UAWC officers, which linked them to the PLFP. These included Abdal Farraj, who we described as a former director of administrative and financial affairs with a history of imprisonment by the Israeli authorities and who had been described as a security threat. We did not

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realise at that time that he was a current UAWC employee. UAWC is not a transparent organisation and does not publish a list of its officers.

We asked you various questions relating to the due diligence you had carried out before you decided to fund UAWC. These questions were ignored in your reply dated 19 June 2019.

Our Second Letter did contain details of two UAWC officers – Abdu Farraj and Samer Arbid - who had been arrested and were on trial in connection with the Shnerb terror attack in August 2019. However, we also enclosed with the Second Letter a dossier of information on the links between many of the former and current employees of the UAWC including:

- Abdal Farraj
- Samer Arbid
- Rezk Al Barghouti
- Bashir Al-Khairi
- Hassan Jaber
- Ismat Al-Shouli
- Mouhammad Saqa
- Faysal Khalafallah
- Taghrid Jouma
- Hiba Abdul Kareem
- Maysr Faqih
- Muhammad al-Bakri
- Yusuf Abd Al Haq
- Ahmad Sufan
- Muhammad Nujum
- Fouad Abu Seif
- Muayad Basharat
- Khaled Hidmi
- Zakaria Bakr
- Suliman Shahin
- Magdy Yaghi
- (our updated 4 August 2020 report also contains details about Ubai Aboudi)

Our Second Letter also contained extensive references to the contribution agreements between the UAWC and the Netherlands, and the breaches of these agreements by UAWC.

As you can see, our letters contained far more information than simply describing a possible link between UAWC and the PFLP based on the arrest of two former employees of UAWC.

#### **UAWC employees arrested in late 2019**

You state in your letter dated 20 July 2020 that UAWC informed you that one of its employees was taken into custody on 3 October 2019, and another employee was taken into custody later on in October 2019.

Please let us know the names of these two UAWC employees.

According to our information UAWC had three employees who were arrested towards the end of 2019.

Were you informed of any other UAWC employees who have been arrested since October 2019?

We would like to draw your attention to the Facebook Page dated 2 February 2017 of the Netherlands Representative Office in Ramallah (below).



Identities of the UAWC officers in the Netherlands Facebook photo:



This photo shows the Netherlands representatives standing alongside two UAWC representatives who are currently in prison, and a third who has been the spokesman for the PFLP leader. They are celebrating the signing of a 2017 agreement to donate over \$11 million to UAWC.

**Left to Right – front row:**

**Rezki Al Barghouti** is the [current Chairman](#) of UAWC. He also has strong connections with the PFLP: In 2016 Barghouti was the spokesman for [Ahmad Sa'adat](#), the Secretary-General of the PFLP and a convicted terrorist imprisoned by Israel during a [ceremony held in Ramallah for Palestinian prisoners](#). In 2014, UAWC members including Barghouti, participated in a [PFLP delegation to Brazil](#). On 5 August 2017 Barghouti posted on Facebook a [eulogy for Ammar Tirawi](#), a Palestinian terrorist who carried out two shooting attacks on 15 July 2017, referring to him as a hero.

**Fouad Abu Seif** is [Director General of UAWC](#). He was [arrested in July 2012](#) after his house in Hebron was stormed by reinforced forces from the army. The UAWC [denounced](#) his arrest.

**Abdul Razaq Farraj** was the [finance director of UAWC](#) who was [arrested by the IDF in late 2019](#). According to his indictment, he authorized the 23 August 2019 bombing of the Schnerb family, which killed 17 year old Rina Shnerb and injured her father and brother. We now know that despite his criminal background, and despite his various arrests, Mr Farraj had been employed by UAWC for the past 30 years. Farraj was finance director at the time of his arrest in November 2019. He was a senior official, central to the organisation, and yet he was a PFLP member, and a man who has been accused of carrying out a terrorist atrocity and is now on trial for that atrocity

We are now aware that **Ubai Aboudi** was the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of UAWC from October 2015 to the present time, according to his own [Linked In profile](#). He is also Executive Director of Bisan Center for Research & Development. On 13 November 2019 [Aboudi was arrested](#) and issued with a four month administrative detention order, and on [2 June 2020, Israel's military court](#) in Ofer sentenced Aboudi to 12 months in Israeli prison and a fine of 2,500 NIS (approximately \$720 USD). Aboudi was apparently a recruiter for the PFLP. [Aboudi is referred to in the indictment of Abdul Razaq Farraj as a PFLP member](#) who Farraj allegedly told to recruit more members to the cell.

Aboudi also has a history of involvement with the PFLP. In early [2005 he was arrested](#), along with two others in a PFLP terrorist cell, who were planning an attack at the Latrun Armory Museum and to carry out a shooting attack against an IDF vehicle and abduct the soldiers' bodies. Aboudi was [also arrested in 2010](#), and had spent over four years in Israeli prisons on charges including membership of the PFLP, according to an Amnesty International report.

The other UAWC employee who was arrested in connection with the terrorist attack on the Shnerb family was **Samer Arbid**. Arbid was [Financial Director of the UAWC](#) from around 2015 to 2016. As indicated above, he is also currently on trial for commanding [the PLFP terror cell](#) that carried out the bomb attack on the Shnerb family. A [Jerusalem Post article published on 5 October 2019](#) stated that Arbid is “one of the PFLP’s officials in Ramallah and was previously arrested for involvement in terrorist activities during the Second Intifada under the direct command of the PFLP leadership, preparing explosive devices and committing terrorist attacks.” Arbid was described by Amnesty International in September 2019 as [“a member of the PFLP”](#).

We have now found out that Arbid may have been employed by UAWC at the time of his arrest in 2019 because chairman of UAWC, Rizk Al Barghouthi [refers to Arbid as a “colleague” in October 2019](#) at a protest march against his arrest, as reported in the Arab press.

Therefore at least three of the current employees of UAWC may have been arrested in late 2019. The fact that at least three of UAWC’s senior employees are likely to have been PFLP members, and actively involved in terrorist offences demonstrates the extent of the connection between the UAWC organisation and the PFLP. It also demonstrates that it is likely that UAWC premises and facilities were being used by these PFLP members. The Netherlands government has already established that it was partially paying the salaries of those individuals who were arrested last year.

## **Due Diligence**

We note that your letter dated 20 July 2020 deals with due diligence and you state: *“all organisations supported by the Netherlands have to pass an evaluation and meet certain criteria” and that the partner organisations are monitored including by external audits.*”

You also say that you rely on external audits of UAWC’s accounts as part of your due diligence. We are aware that UAWC’s accounts were until mid-2019 audited annually by PwC and thereafter audited by EY.

If you are relying on PwC’s audits as part of your due diligence, you should be aware that a complaint is outstanding against PwC in relation to these audits.

We have submitted a complaint about PwC’s auditing of UAWC’s accounts to the UK National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines as we believe that they have breached the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Details are [HERE](#):

UKLFI's complaints have been found to be "material and substantiated" and "merit further examination", and are currently [under investigation by the UK National Contact Point](#).

We are concerned that PwC failed to highlight the clear links between UAWC and the PFLP terrorist group, and further failed to take any steps to mitigate the impact of these terrorist links when it audited the accounts of these organisations.

As a result of these failures, UAWC was able to continue providing support to the PFLP terrorist group by, for example, employing members of PFLP, offering support to members of PFLP, potentially enabling direct or indirect funding of the PFLP and enabling the PFLP terrorist doctrine to be promoted and disseminated.

You state that you consulted other donors in 2013, before you started co-operation with UAWC, who also conducted due diligence and carried out screenings. You do not give details of their due diligence, on which you appear to rely.

It only takes an internet search to uncover the very obvious links between the UAWC and the PFLP that our dossier describes.

You say that UAWC is not listed as a proscribed terrorist group. This is correct as UAWC is not proscribed. Our point is that it is the agricultural affiliate of a proscribed terrorist group, PFLP, and that many of its officials are affiliated to the PFLP, as we set out in our report.

### **Contribution Agreements**

In our Second Letter to you we set out in detail the clauses of the Contribution Agreements dated 2013 and 2017, between the State of the Netherlands and UAWC, which it appears UAWC have breached, by their close affiliation with the PFLP, and by employing members of the PFLP.

We believe that there is sufficient evidence that UAWC, through its affiliation with the PFLP, is working to undermine the state of Israel and is therefore in breach of the agreements. We note that the State of the Netherlands has the right to suspend transfer of instalments (which we understand you have done), or demand repayment of all or part of the funds already transferred (which we hope you will do).

We note that you say that the Netherlands expects its partners to refrain from supporting terrorism and that funding agreements prohibit the use of Dutch funding for any activity incompatible with the Netherlands' foreign policy. We believe that UAWC has failed to live up to your expectations since it apparently has been supporting terrorism.

### **The 2012 Australian investigation**

Many donors to UAWC rely on the fact that an AusAid report dated 17 October 2012 (The AusAid Report) apparently vindicated UAWC regarding ties to the PLFP. This report was commissioned following a complaint in 2011 by Shurat HaDin, which set out links between UAWC and the PFLP.

However, since 2012 far more evidence showing links between the UAWC and PFLP has emerged, as contained in our attached report.

Furthermore, some basic facts relied on in the AusAid report have subsequently been rebutted. In particular:

The AusAid Report vindicated UAWC relying on the belief that “*the government of Israel does not consider UAWC to be a terrorist entity*”. But AusAid’s assertion is not correct. Letters from Israel’s General Security Service (the Shin Bet) dated 28 March 2017 and from Israel’s Ministry of Justice Corporations Authority dated 4 April 2017 confirm that UAWC “*is a body which operates on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*”. (see U127 and U128).

The AusAid Report also relied on its belief that UAWC had a Jerusalem based office since 1996, and if the Israeli authorities accepted it as a bone fide charity then it must be so.

However, the letters from Israel’s General Security Service (the Shin Bet) dated 28 March 2017 and from Israel’s Ministry of Justice Corporations Authority dated 4 April 2017 both confirm that UAWC did not have a Jerusalem office and was never registered as a not for profit organisation in Israel – it was registered in Gaza at that time.

A different entity, “the Committee of Agricultural Works” (CAW), had been registered in Jerusalem, but did not submit any documents relating to its activities. For this reason the registrar struck off CAW from the register of not for profit organisations on 25 January 2018.

The UAWC were found to have fraudulently provided foreign donors (such as World Vision Australia, which acted on behalf of AusAid) with the Israeli charity registration documents of another entity, CAW, falsely claiming them as its own in an effort to obtain government funding. UAWC were fraudulently using the office of another entity, CAW, to make it appear that they had a Jerusalem office.

The two major points that the AusAid Report had made to justify their rejection of Shurat HaDin’s allegations have been rebutted. All the evidence relating to the rebuttal of the AusAid report is in our attached report.

Australia donated to UAWC via another charity, World Vision, which carried out due diligence on its behalf. However, World Vision’s charity operations manager in Gaza, Muhammad el-Halabi, was indicted for diverting the charity’s funds to Hamas on 4 August 2016.

Following this arrest the Australians halted their cooperation with World Vision and stopped funding UAWC. This also casts a serious doubt on the process of examining the allegations against the UAWC back in 2012, if this Hamas official was their representative in Gaza when they made the inquiries about UAWC.

We believe that Norway was sent details of the rebuttals to the AusAid report by the International Legal Forum by letter dated 29 March 2018. We can supply a copy of their letter if you request it.

### **Your External Review**

We are pleased that Minister Sigrid Kaag is going to conduct an external review of this matter. We would be grateful if you would send us details of how the external review will be carried out and to whom should we make submissions and what is the time frame?

### **Oxfam Novib**

The Netherlands also indirectly funds the UAWC through its funding of Oxfam Novib. Details are on this website: [https://www.ngo-monitor.org/funder/oxfam\\_novib/](https://www.ngo-monitor.org/funder/oxfam_novib/) Therefore we would be grateful if your review of the matter could also take into account the donations made via Oxfam Novib. Furthermore, any suspension of funding to UAWC should also take into account the funding that is channelled via Oxfam Novib.

We look forward to receiving your responses to our questions in this letter within 14 days.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Turner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

### **Caroline Turner**

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