

PMW special report

The PA/PLO Commission of Prisoners' Affairs and its director Qadri Abu Bakr, are guilty of providing "financial... [and] other services ... in support of acts of terrorism," as defined in Executive Order 13224

by Maurice Hirsch, Adv. and Itamar Marcus

Executive summary

In March 2018, as part of the US war on terror, Congress passed the Taylor Force Act (TFA). Named after US veteran Taylor Force who was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist, TFA conditioned US direct aid to the Palestinian Authority on the abolition of the PA's payment of cash rewards to terrorists.

Since the PA's creation, it has paid salaries to terrorist prisoners and released terrorists. The PA also pays monthly allowances to wounded terrorists and to the families of dead terrorists (so-called "Martyrs"). These payments are known as the PA's Pay-for-Slay policy. TFA determined that these payments are an "incentive to commit acts of terror."

Rejecting the elementary requirement of TFA, the PA has continued to pay the terror rewards to terrorists, spending hundreds of millions of shekels/dollars every year.

Since the PA leaders have publically attacked the US' passage of TFA, rejected its terms, and continue rewarding terrorists and their families, the appropriate next step in the US war on terror is to designate for sanctions those PA/PLO officials and entities involved in this incentivizing of terror.

Executive Order 13224 authorizes the US to designate "individuals or entities... [who] assist in, sponsor, or provide financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to or in support of, acts of terrorism."¹ The

¹ <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224/>

PA/PLO Commission of Prisoners' Affairs and its Director Qadri Abu Bakr, the entity and individual who are directly responsible for the paying of salaries to terrorist prisoners, directly "provide financial... [and] other services ... in support of, acts of terrorism." Accordingly, designating the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs and Abu Bakras sponsors of terror in accordance with Executive Order 13224, is the appropriate and necessary next step toward accomplishing the anti-terror goals of TFA. The designation would be fulfilling both the letter and spirit of TFA and Executive Order 13224.

The Report

Name: Qadri Abu Bakr

DOB: 1953

Position: Director of the PLO Commission of Prisoners and Released Prisoners' Affairs 8/2018 – present

Qadri Abu Bakr was born in 1953. At age 17 he was arrested by Israel for involvement in terrorist activities. Released in 1986, he later surfaced in Iraq. He entered the PA controlled areas as part of the Oslo Accords.

Abu Bakr is the uncle of Mohammed Salameh, one of the terrorists convicted for the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing. Their contacts prior to the attack have been documented.²

Having served in different positions within the PA security apparatus, Abu Bakr now holds the rank of Major General. In August 2018, PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas appointed him to be the Director of the PLO Commission of Prisoners and Released Prisoners' Affairs (Hereinafter: "The Commission of Prisoners' Affairs").

In the capacity of his position as the Director of the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs Abu Bakr is directly in charge of the PA/PLO institution that pays salaries to terrorist prisoners and released terrorists.

Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) has been documenting and exposing the PA's practice of paying salaries to Palestinian terrorists since 2011. PMW's raising of international awareness of this practice has resulted in mounting pressure from international donors on the PA to stop this practice or face the possibility of losing the financial support of those donors.

² <https://palwatch.org/page/14627>

In August 2014, the PA claimed to acquiesce to international pressure, and announced that it had closed the PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, and that salaries to prisoners will no longer be paid by the PA but by a newly formed PLO Commission of Prisoners' Affairs.

The new PLO Commission of Prisoners Affairs is identical to the old PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs in everything but name. The Commission and the salary payments to prisoners remain under the "supervision" of the "Palestinian presidency," i.e., Mahmoud Abbas. The then PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs – Issa Karake - became the director of the PLO Commission of Prisoners' Affairs.

The PA's deliberate attempt to hide from the international community that it was PA money that was paying terrorists' salaries was exposed, in 2016, in PMW's report "The PA's Billion Dollar Fraud"³.

The PA salary payments are made to all Palestinian terrorist prisoners and released prisoners, including those who were and remain members in E.O. 13224 designated terrorist organizations such as **Hamas** (the Islamic Resistance Movement); the **PFLP** (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine); **Palestinian Islamic Jihad**; and Fatah's military wing **The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades**.

According to the Palestinian Authority Law of Prisoners and Released Prisoners of 2004, the Palestinians who are entitled to receive a salary are "Anyone imprisoned in the occupation's [Israel's] prisons as a result of his participation in the struggle against the occupation" (Para. 1), meaning every single imprisoned terrorist.

The salaries are not paid to Palestinians imprisoned for committing other criminal offences that were not part of the "struggle against the occupation" such as robbery or car theft.

The Commission of Prisoners is the entity that makes the salary payments to the thousands of terrorists. Qadri Abu Bakr as Director of the Commission of Prisoners, is the individual personally responsible for the payments of salaries to the thousands of terrorists. Abu Bakr is also the PA liaison who meets regularly with released terrorists and the families of terrorist prisoners. Abu Bakr's support for terrorists is also clear by his coining them terrorist prisoners as "**heroes**" (see below).

The PA's Law of Prisoners

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<http://palwatch.org/STORAGE/special%20reports/PMW%20report,%20PA%20billion%20dollar%20fraud,%20270416.pdf>

In December 2004, the PA passed the Law of Prisoners and Released Prisoners⁴ (Hereinafter: “The Law of Prisoners”).

The law stipulated that all persons “*imprisoned in the occupation's [Israel's] prisons as a result of his participation in the struggle against the occupation*”⁵ will receive a monthly salary⁶. In addition to regulating the payment of the salaries to the prisoners, the law declared that the “*prisoners and released prisoners are a fighting sector, and an inseparable part of the Palestinian society*”⁷ and prohibited the PA from signing or participating in the signing of any peace agreement unless it included the release of all the Palestinian prisoners⁸. The law further provided the basis for the provision of salaries to released terrorist prisoners.

To implement the Law of Prisoners, the PA has promulgated a number of regulations.

The latest regulations regarding the payment of salaries to the terrorist prisoners⁹ came into force in January 2011. According to these regulations, the monthly salary paid to the terrorist prisoners now is as follows¹⁰:

Years in prison	Monthly salary (Shekels)
0 – 3	1,400
3 – 5	2,000
5 – 10	4,000
10 – 15	6,000
15 – 20	7,000
20 – 25	8,000
25 – 30	10,000
30 +	12,000

The current regulations, similar to the previous regulations, also provided a 300 shekel supplement for married terrorist prisoners; a 50 shekel supplement for each

⁴ http://www.lab.pna.ps/cached_uploads/download/2018/01/28/54-1517150632.pdf

⁵ Para. 1 of the Law of Prisoners.

⁶ Para. 7 of the Law of Prisoners.

⁷ Para. 2 of the Law of Prisoners.

⁸ Para. 4 of the Law of Prisoners.

⁹ Government decision No. 23 of 2010 regarding Regulations for Payment of the Monthly Salary to the Prisoner and His Family (http://www.lab.pna.ps/cached_uploads/download/2018/01/28/90-1517150637.pdf)

¹⁰ Para. 12 of the regulations.

minor child of the terrorist prisoners; a 300 shekel supplement for terrorist prisoners who are Jerusalem residents; and a 500 shekel supplement for terrorist prisoners who are residents in Israel.

The 2011 regulation regarding the payment of the salaries to the terrorist prisoners remain in force to this day.

It is these payments that TFA characterizes as and “incentive to commit acts of terror.”

Proof that the salaries are in fact being paid

While PMW learnt of the payment of the salaries by the PA to the terrorists through the official PA media and thereafter by researching the relevant PA laws, PMW also received copies of official PA payment reports of a number of prisoners. The documents listed all the payments to terrorists Muhammad Arman and Walid Anjas who were convicted for involvement in the following terror attacks:

- The Moment Café suicide bombing, March 2002 - **11 civilians murdered;**
- The Sheffield Club, suicide bombing, May 7, 2002 – **15 civilians murdered;**
- The Hebrew University cafeteria suicide bombing July 2003 - **9 civilians murdered, including 3 American citizens** (Benjamin Blutstein, 25, of Pennsylvania, David Gritz, 24, of Massachusetts and Ruth Coulter, 36, of New York)

A total of 35 civilians were killed in the three attacks and approximately 200 were injured. The terrorists were convicted and sentenced to 36 life sentences each.

The BBC reported on their conviction on Nov. 3, 2003:

“ Hamas bombers sentenced to life

An Israeli military court has sentenced two Palestinians to 36 life terms each for their role in suicide bombings in which dozens of people

died... Mohammed Hassan Arman and Walid Anjas, from the Jerusalem suburb of Silwan, said they did not regret their actions...

The three-judge panel said the pair cared only about themselves.

"The looks on their faces and the smiles of the accused when the prosecutor mentioned the victims cannot leave any doubt about their lack of conscience," the judges wrote.

"They showed that the lives of other people mean nothing to them."

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3251426.stm]

Arman and Anjas, members of Hamas responsible for the murder of 36 people, have received full Palestinian Authority salaries from the day of their arrest. The following are copies of the actual PA monthly payment statements:

Muhammad Arman

Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Detainees Affairs		السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية وزارة شؤون الأسرى والمحررين	
موجز بيانات الموظف			
رقم الملف	441897	رقم الهوية	901157479
الاسم	محمد ارمان	الجنس	عربان
مركز صرف	24 روتات	تاريخ الأثر	18/08/2002
اسم المستفيد	أيضا خنصر عبدالعظيم عرس	شهر الأثر	01 شهر 01 سنة 0999
اسم الوكيل	الهوية 01	الهوية	901157479
الجنس	الآرمن	الفرع	روتات
الراتب	6450	تاريخ الأثر	01/10/2003
المخصص	6450	نهاية الأثر	01/06/2013
شهر	2	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	1	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	12	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	11	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	10	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	9	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	8	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	7	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	6	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	5	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	4	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	3	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	2	رقم الهوية	901157479
شهر	1	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	12	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	11	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	10	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	9	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	8	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	6	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	5	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	4	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	3	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	2	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	1	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	12	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	11	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	10	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	9	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	8	رقم الهوية	901152479
شهر	7	رقم الهوية	901152479

Identification

Payments made to the terrorist

Note the jump in the salary paid (from 1,750 shekels to 6,450 shekels). This jump reflects a rise in the salaries paid. In April 2011, Arman had accumulatively served over 10 years in jail (entitling him to a basic salary of 6,000 shekels a month) and was married with 3 children (entitling him to an additional payment of 450 shekels).

Walid Anjas

Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Detainees Affairs		المملكة الوطنية الفلسطينية وزارة شؤون الأسرى والمحررين																									
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>رقم الملف</td> <td>448167</td> <td>رقم الهوية</td> <td>9095-448105</td> </tr> <tr> <td>الاسم</td> <td>والد عبدالعزيز</td> <td>الجنس</td> <td>الذكور</td> </tr> <tr> <td>مركز صرف</td> <td>34 رفد الله</td> <td>محلر</td> <td>المكفوم</td> </tr> <tr> <td>اسم العائلة</td> <td>عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس</td> <td>الهوية</td> <td>944520329</td> </tr> <tr> <td>اسم الوثائق</td> <td>6</td> <td>الفرع</td> <td>9090</td> </tr> <tr> <td>المخصص</td> <td>1800</td> <td>الاشتراكات</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>				رقم الملف	448167	رقم الهوية	9095-448105	الاسم	والد عبدالعزيز	الجنس	الذكور	مركز صرف	34 رفد الله	محلر	المكفوم	اسم العائلة	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	الهوية	944520329	اسم الوثائق	6	الفرع	9090	المخصص	1800	الاشتراكات	0
رقم الملف	448167	رقم الهوية	9095-448105																								
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اسم الوثائق	6	الفرع	9090																								
المخصص	1800	الاشتراكات	0																								
موجز بيانات الملف		تاريخ الأسر	22/08/2002																								
حالة زوجية	متزوج	شهر	0																								
عدد الزوجات	0	عدد الاعتداء	999																								
الحوان	التعاون	نهاية الاعتداء	01/04/2012																								
رقم القيد	668415	تاريخ الاعتداء	01/11/2002																								

رقم القيد	الفرع	رقم الهوية	اسم المستفيد	المرجع	التعيين	الاشتراكات	شهر المخصص	السنة
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1800	2 2012
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1800	1 2012
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1800	12 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1800	11 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	4000	10 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	4000	9 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	4000	8 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	4000	7 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	400	13500	4000	5 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	4 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	4 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	26000	1300	3 2011
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	12 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	11 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	10 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	9 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	8 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	7 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	6 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	5 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	4 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	3 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	2 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	1 2010
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	12 2009
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	11 2009
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	10 2009
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	9 2009
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	8 2009
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	7 2009
668415	9090	944520329	عائلة يوسف حسن انجاس	0	0	0	1300	6 2009

Identification

Payments made to the terrorist

Note the jump in the salary paid (from 1,300 shekels to 4,000 shekels). This jump reflects a rise in the salaries paid. In June 2011, Anjas had served between 5 - 10 years in jail (entitling him to a basic salary of 4,000 shekels a month).

Additional proof of the PA’s payment of salaries to the terrorist prisoners

In the course of civil litigation conducted in the Jerusalem District Court, a witness on behalf of the PA, Adv. Jawad Amawi, submitted an Expert Opinion in which he presented the history of the payments and provided details of the current payments. According to the Expert Opinion, Amawi served as the Head of the Legal Department of the PA Ministry of Prisoners’ Affairs from 2008 to 2014. The Expert Opinion confirms that the PA paid and is currently paying the salaries to the terrorists.

The following is a translation of the relevant sections of Amawi’s opinion:

“Expert Opinion

I the undersigned, Jawad Amawi, I.D. 313872079, was asked by the Carmeli-Armon Law Firm to give my professional opinion regarding **payments to the Palestinian prisoners’ families.**

I give my opinion here in place of in-court testimony, and I hereby declare that it is well known to me that regarding the instructions of the criminal law concerning false testimony under oath in court, my signed opinion here is the same as testimony under oath given in court.

The details of my education:

1990: Graduate of the University of Jordan, faculty of law

Current position: Advisor to the [PA] minister of finance, including advising on matters of legislation concerning the Ministry of Finance.

The details of my professional experience:

1994-2001: Private attorney.

Member of the Palestinian Bar Association’s legislative committee, which coordinated its work with the Palestinian Council’s constitution, law, and justice committee.

2001-2003: Attorney Expert in the NGO Al-Qanoun, which dealt in prisoners’ affairs and topics relevant to international law.

2003-2008: Member of a program sponsored by UNICEF of the UN that specialized in providing legal aid to prisoner minors and women, which passed to the hands of the Swedish organization Sida in 2006.

2008-2014: Establishing and managing the legal department of the Palestinian [PA] Ministry of Prisoners’ [Affairs].

Member of the Palestinian [PA] government’s legislative committee, whose role includes examining all of the bills and legislation.

2009-2013: Chairman of the subcommittee on the regulations of the Prisoners’ Law.

In addition, in all my years of work I privately represented security prisoners in the [Israeli] military courts, in conjunction with my public work.

A. History of the legislation

3. Palestinian prisoners' families have received payments during terms of imprisonment since the 1970s. The responsibility for transferring the payments passed between different organs throughout the years. This is a long-standing tradition of financial support for the families of those who struggled for the Palestinian people's independence.

...

6. Payments to the families of the prisoners in the Israeli prisons began in May 1995, as budgeting of aid from the Palestinian National Authority's Ministry of Social Affairs (which corresponds to the Ministry of Welfare in Israel) [parentheses in source]. The amount of the aid was \$100 a month for the family of an unmarried prisoner, and \$150 for the family of a married prisoner. The rate of the dollar at the time was approximately 3 Israeli shekels = \$1. On Jan. 1, 1998, the budgeting was raised by an amount of 200 Israeli shekels to each family. In 1999, the budgeting was updated to 700 Israeli shekels for families of unmarried prisoners, and 800 Israeli shekels for families of married ones.

...

8. Only on Dec. 27, 2004, was the Law of the Prisoners and Released Prisoners legislated. This was the first act of legislation that dealt with the problem of the prisoners who were not released from the prisons, as was agreed in the Oslo Accords. The law was accepted by the Palestinian Legislative Council (i.e., the PA Parliament), approved by the [PA] president, and published in the Records. The law was not presented before the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Committee for Legislation because the committee ended its activity with the end of the transitional period in 2001, whereas the law was legislated in 2004.

9. The law determined general principles regarding the prisoners, the most important of which is the principle according to which it is the responsibility of the [Palestinian] Authority to bring about the prisoners' release from the prisons and to provide them and their families with aid, among other things in obtaining an education and in paying medical insurance. The law also determined aid for released prisoners, because experience showed that prior to its legislation many individual requests for aid were made by released prisoners.

...

11. In the period between Jan. 1, 2004, and Dec. 31, 2010, after the prisoners were not released in accordance with the layout of Oslo and the cost of living rose, the amounts of the payments were updated in administrative decisions (as the regulations on the matter had not yet been put in place) as follows:

(A table is presented of monthly allowances in Israeli shekels according to the number of years of imprisonment –Ed.)

...

12. The amounts were paid on the basis of the years of actual imprisonment, such that in the initial years of imprisonment the prisoners' families received support of a small amount of 1,000 Israeli shekels per month. The more the actual imprisonment continued, the more the amount gradually rose.

13. In addition, release grants were given to aid released prisoners in withstanding the expenses of returning to life and rehabilitation. The amounts ranged from \$500-\$10,000 per prisoner, in accordance with the years of actual imprisonment before the release. The release grant is not given to every released prisoner, and he is examined according to his socio-economic status and sources of income.

...

15. With the end of the second Intifada (i.e., PA terror campaign 2000-2005 Ed.) and the rise of the government of [PA Prime Minister] Dr. Salam Fayyad, a reorganization of the Palestinian institutions began on the basis of international principles and accounting and audit systems. At this point an urgent need arose for a legal basis for the payments that until then were paid to the prisoners' families only based on administrative decisions without legal legislation, and to amend regulations to the Law of the Prisoners and Released Prisoners as was determined by the law.

16. As part of the reorganization, the [PA] Ministry of Prisoners and Released Prisoners' Affairs was established in 2008, and the entire field was transferred to its care.

...

17. A collection of special regulations for the Law of the Prisoners and Released Prisoners from 2004 was published only in 2010: Procedure of Legal Aid for the Prisoners (No. 22 of 2010); Procedure

Ensuring the Needs of the Prisoners Imprisoned in Israeli Prisons (No. 21 of 2010); Validation of the Exemption from Registration Fees for Education and Health Insurance for Released Prisoners (No. 19 of 2010); Procedure of Paying a Monthly Salary to the Prisoner (No. 23 of 2010). The procedure defines a salary “for the prisoner’s family or for the prisoner himself,” which will be given to a prisoner who has no other salary and will end on the day of his release. The procedures were approved by the Palestinian [PA] government by law and were published in the 2010 Records. In 2013, Procedure of Ensuring Employment for Released Prisoners (No. 15 of 2013), which deals with jobs for the released prisoners in order to allow them a life in dignity, was also published. The regulations codified the general matters that were written in the law regarding the payment for the prisoner, and determined that the payment would be transferred to the prisoners’ families. When implementing the regulations I personally direct the payments to the prisoners’ families.

Attached herewith is a copy of the collections of regulations and their translations to Hebrew, and **they are marked B.**

...

19. In accordance with the regulations, starting in 2011 the amount of the monthly payments to the prisoners’ families was raised significantly. There were several main reasons for updating the amounts:

- A. The last update of the amounts took place seven years prior to then, in 2004.
- B. The previous amounts did not reach the lowest standard of a family’s living necessities, and did not allow the prisoners’ families a life in dignity, particularly those whose providers were and are in prison for many years.
- C. The Palestinian National Authority attempted to curb the popular anger and prevent a revolution of protest against what was perceived as its failure to release the prisoners.
- D. The deterioration of the political, economic, and social situation, and the absence of any political horizon.

The updated amounts starting from 2011 are:

Years of Actual Imprisonment	Monthly Payment in Israeli Shekels
------------------------------	------------------------------------

0-3	1,400
3-5	2,000
5-10	4,000
10-15	6,000
15-20	7,000
20-25	8,000
25-30	10,000
30+	12,000

20. The amounts are paid according to the years of actual imprisonment. In other words, in the initial years of imprisonment small sums are paid, and as the actual imprisonment continues and the prisoner is not released, the sums that are paid to his family rise gradually.

...

22. The family of a security prisoner that lives in Jerusalem receives an additional payment of 300 Israeli shekels due to the disparities in the cost of living. The family of a security prisoner that lives in the territory of the State of Israel receives an addition of 500 Israeli shekels due to the disparities in the cost of living.

23. For a prisoner who was employed by the Palestinian Authority before his imprisonment, his family will continue to receive the amount of his salary during the imprisonment, even if the payments that he deserves according to the regulations are lower...

24. In 2014, the Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Prisoners' [Affairs] was cancelled, and it became a separate authority subordinate to the Palestine Liberation Organization, out of an understanding that the prisoners' issue is an issue that will be resolved as part of the negotiations between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel.

...

The postponement of the release after 2000 and the rage created due to it

26. As stated above, the payments to the prisoners' families are a long-standing tradition from before the establishment of the

Palestinian National Authority, but the current problem of the prisoners was created due to the continuation of the interim stage beyond the period that was determined for it in the Oslo Accords. All of the security prisoners were supposed to be released from imprisonment in 2000 and to integrate into the institutions of the Palestinian state when it is established.

...

Attorney Jawad Amawi
(Amawi's signature appears –Ed.)
Expert on prisoners' affairs and Palestinian financial legislation
July 19, 2017"

Salaries are not paid to non-terrorist criminals

As noted above, the PA law defines those entitled to a salary as "**Anyone imprisoned in the occupation's [Israel's] prisons as a result of his participation in the struggle against the occupation**".

An article published in the official PA daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, demonstrates that this definition applies only to terrorists and not regular criminals.

In December 2015, an internal dispute started within the PA, when the PA decided to stop the salary payments to a number of prisoners and released prisoners for various reasons. The halting of the payments to criminal prisoners was explained by Secretary-General of the PA government Ali Abu Diyak¹¹:

“Secretary-General of the [PA] government Ali Abu Diyak stated that the government is obligated to provide all of the services to its people... and to pay the needs of Martyrs' families, and the needs and salaries of prisoners in the Israeli occupation's prisons, and released prisoners, according to the law... The government will not pay public funds to people who are not entitled to them... **the prisoners' salaries are paid to the fighter prisoners**, who were arrested due to their national struggle, and not to others ... it [the government] will **not pay allowances and salaries to criminal prisoners** and others that are not included in the framework of the law.”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Dec. 10, 2015, emphasis added]

¹¹ <https://palwatch.org/page/9335>

Qadri Abu Bakr - Director of the PLO Commission of Prisoners and Released Prisoners' Affairs

As stated above, as the head of the Commission of Prisoners Affairs, Abu Bakr is the individual responsible for the payments of the terror reward salaries to the terrorist prisoners.

In addition to being responsible for the payments, Abu Bakr is also the PA/PLO official publically defending the payments, as well as being the liaison to the families of the terrorists. The following are some of Abu Bakr's activities.

Immediately after being appointed¹², Abu Bakr condemned Israel's Anti Pay-for-Slay Law saying it would pose a problem for the PA and constituted a financial war. He further reiterated Abbas' statement to pay the families of the dead terrorists (so-called "Martyrs"), even with his last penny¹³:

"The implementation of this is going to constitute a large problem for us. In other words, this is a financial war. However, both [PA] President [Abbas] and the Palestinian leadership have said that not a single penny can be touched. Even if only one shekel remains - we will give it to the families of Martyrs."

[Official PA TV, Aug 4, 2018]

Israel's version of the Anti Pay-for-Slay Law¹⁴ was passed in July 2018¹⁵. The law provides that at the end of each year, Israel's Defense Minister must compile a report detailing the PA expenditure on the salaries to the terrorist prisoners and released prisoners and allowances to the families of the dead terrorists, in the previous year. Once the Security Cabinet approves the report, an amount equal to the PA expenditure is then deducted from the taxes that Israel collects and transfers to the PA.

Shortly after taking up his new position, the PLO Commission of Prisoners' Affairs, Abu Bakr, participated in an event to celebrate the release of terrorist prisoners and visited Latifa Abu Hmeid (a.k.a Um Nasser Abu Hmeid, Um Yusuf Abu Hmeid, Khansa of Palestine) who is the mother of six terrorist murderers (5 serving life sentences and 1 killed while trying to escape arrest). In these events, Abu Bakr

¹² <https://palwatch.org/page/14537>

¹³ <https://palwatch.org/page/14543>

¹⁴ Law to freeze money that the Palestinian Authority has paid in connection with terrorism from the money transferred to it by the government of Israel, 2018

¹⁵ <https://palwatch.org/page/14402>

affirmed the PA commitment to resist any US or Israeli pressure and to continue to pay the salaries of the terrorist prisoners and released prisoners and the allowances of the families of the dead terrorists.

A post on the Facebook page of the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs described the events and quoted Abu Bakr¹⁶:

“Director of [PLO] Commission of Prisoners' Affairs Maj. Gen. Qadri Abu Bakr emphasized that the Palestinian leadership – led by President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah – will make every effort for the prisoners, the released prisoners, and their families. During a ceremony honoring some released prisoners in the Jenin district, Abu Bakr emphasized... that we must deal with the challenges, and that we must not give in to the American and Israeli pressure on everything connected to the salaries of the Martyrs and the prisoners. Abu Bakr congratulated the released prisoners on their release. He also blessed the prisoners within the prisons and their families for the blessed Eid Al-Adha (i.e., Muslim “Sacrifice Feast” holiday)...

On the same matter, Director of Commission of Prisoners' Affairs Qadri Abu Bakr visited Khansa of Palestine Um Yusuf Abu Hmeid.”

[Facebook page, PLO Commission of Prisoners, Aug 19, 2018]

In December 2018, Abu Bakr, accompanied by District Governor of Ramallah and El-Bireh Laila Ghannam, again met with Abu Hmeid (mentioned above, mother of six terrorist murderers) and emphasized¹⁷ that “the entire Palestinian people appreciates the sacrifice of this family, and that the path of honorable struggle of its Martyr and prisoner sons is a crown of honor to every free and respectable person.” [Official PA daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Dec. 13, 2018]



Abu Bakr meets with Latifa Abu Hmeid (right)

¹⁶ <https://palwatch.org/page/14599>

¹⁷ <https://palwatch.org/page/15043>

After Israeli authorities demolished Abu Hmeid's house in response to her son, Islam, murdering Israeli soldier Ronen Lyubarski, Abu Bakr said¹⁸ that "blowing up the Abu Hmeid family's home is barbaric terrorism and extreme collective punishment, which emits an odor of loathing, hatred, and Nazism towards the prisoners and their families." [*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, official PA daily, Dec 16, 2018]

Meeting with released terrorists and the families of terrorist prisoners from Jerusalem, Abu Bakr reaffirmed the PA commitment not to succumb to the pressure of the US or Israel regarding the payments to the terrorists or the families of the dead terrorists and expressed his pride in the terrorists¹⁹:

"Abu Bakr emphasized that the leadership, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, will continue to support the resolve of the prisoners and their families and will not succumb to the Israeli and American pressures calling to stop the Martyrs' and prisoners' salaries and allowances.

This was said during Abu Bakr's meeting with families of Jerusalem prisoners and released prisoners at the municipality hall in the village of Al-Eizariya...

Abu Bakr explained that the Israeli and American activity in the international arena is extensive and ongoing, and its goal is to create a stereotype of the Palestinian prisoners and to present them as terrorists...

Abu Bakr expressed his pride in the prisoners, who did not hesitate to sacrifice years of their lives for the freedom of the country and the people that has been suffering for seven decades from the worst occupation known to history."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Sept. 21, 2018]

On an official trip to Egypt, in November 2018, Abu Bakr made a point of visiting released terrorist Fatima Barnawi. Arrested in October 1967, after she placed a bomb in a Jerusalem theater, Barnawi was sentenced to life imprisonment but was released after ten years and expelled to Egypt.

During the meeting Abu Bakr noted²⁰ that his trip symbolically started with their meeting to emphasize "her position in the history of the Palestinian revolution, out of appreciation for her great sacrifice throughout her activity in the struggle." [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Nov 18, 2018] Abu Bakr added that he is "proud" of Barnawi and of all of the Palestinian female prisoners "who were true partners alongside the Palestinian resistance members inside the prisons and outside

¹⁸ <https://palwatch.org/page/15068>

¹⁹ <https://palwatch.org/page/14706>

²⁰ <https://palwatch.org/page/14939>

of them, and whose acts of heroism had a central role in strengthening the unrelenting resolve for more than seven decades.”

In January 2019, Abu Bakr, together with other PA and Fatah officials, participated²¹ in a "rally of solidarity" for terrorist prisoner Maher Younes, who murdered one. [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 20, 2019]

In the aftermath of the rape and murder of Israeli teenager Ori Ansbacher on Feb. 7, 2019, and after the Israeli government decided to implement Israel's Anti Pay-for-Slay Law, and deduct 502 million shekels (the amount the PA admitted spending in 2018 only on paying salaries to terrorists and released terrorists²²) from the 2019 tax revenues, Abu Bakr reiterated the importance given by the PA to rewarding terrorists²³:

"The Israeli crime – the blatant theft of the money of the State of Palestine under the pretext of deducting the salaries that are paid to the families of the Martyrs and prisoners – will be tantamount to an actual bomb that will blow up in the face of the occupation... The Palestinian leadership, led by [PA] President Mahmoud Abbas, emphasizes that the salaries of the families of the Martyrs and the prisoners must not be harmed, and that the last penny in the PA Ministry of Finance will be given with priority to this fighting group... This theft contradicts all of the international norms and conventions, and that silence over this crime of theft by broad daylight will open wide the gates of confrontation with the occupation. The Palestinian people, its leadership, and its institutions will fight this racist extremism, and that the occupation and its leaders will pay a heavy price."

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, official PA daily, Feb 20, 2019]

In July 2019, Abu Bakr participated²⁴ in a ceremony celebrating the children of terrorist prisoners who had completed their matriculation exams. During the ceremony, Abu Bakr was pictured with the daughter of terrorist Wael Qassem who led a terror cell responsible for several terror attacks²⁵, in which 35 were murdered, including a number of US citizens²⁶.

²¹ <https://palwatch.org/page/15207>

²² <https://palwatch.org/page/15217>

²³ <https://palwatch.org/page/15343>

²⁴ <https://palwatch.org/page/16034>

²⁵ The Café Moment suicide bombing in Jerusalem on March 9, 2002, in which 11 were murdered; a bombing at the Hebrew University cafeteria in Jerusalem on July 31, 2002, in which 9 were murdered; and a suicide bombing at the Sheffield Club in Rishon LeZion on May 7, 2002, in which 15 were murdered.

²⁶ Janis Coulter, Marla Bennet, Benjamin Blutstein, David Gritz and Dina Carter (Hebrew University)



[Facebook of Laila Ghannam, PA District Governor of Ramallah and El-Bireh, Jul 23, 2019]

In August 2019, Abu Bakr met²⁷ with the families of a number of terrorists, thereby endorsing their crimes. The families visited included, among others, Latifa Abu Hmeid, the family of Muhammad Abu Satha²⁸ and the family of Issam Al-Faroukh²⁹. [Facebook page of the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs, Sept. 8, 2019]

Responding to the November 2019 decision of the Dutch Government to stop direct funding to the Palestinian Authority due to the PA's payment of the salaries to the terrorist prisoners and allowances to the families of the dead terrorists, Abu Bakr again stressed the priority of the payment of the terrorist salaries³⁰:

“The money that the PA is paying the families of the Martyrs and the prisoners is a right guaranteed by the Palestinian national movement, as part of the conventions and laws it has approved out of a commitment to the fighters and their families... This is a result of the occupation state systematically deceiving the international community in order to falsely accuse our people's legitimate struggle and our right to resist the Israeli occupation of being terror and a crime... The PA and the Palestinian national movement will not change their policy regarding taking care of the prisoners and their families. He added that they will continue to fulfill their obligations to them and will not succumb to the pressures of the occupation authorities and the international community, regardless of the challenges.”

[*Ma'an*, independent Palestinian news agency, Nov 21, 2019]

²⁷ <https://palwatch.org/page/16225>

²⁸ Serving 9 life sentences.

²⁹ Member of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (Fatah's military wing) who, together with Muhammad Saidi, murdered Israeli civilian Maryk Gavrielov in Ramallah in October 2000. Al-Faroukh is serving a life sentence.

³⁰ <https://palwatch.org/page/16908>

Responding to complaints of released prisoners from Hamas who were not receiving their salary, Abu Bakr made clear the PA policy of paying salaries to **all terrorists**, irrespective of their terror group affiliation³¹:

“There is no local, Arab, or international stage from which [PA] President Mahmoud Abbas has not emphasized that the salaries of the prisoners, Martyrs, and wounded are a red line, and that even if only a penny remains in our hands it will be paid to them and their families. A number of weeks ago approximately 30 released prisoners from the Hamas Movement began a sit-in strike in Ramallah, on the pretext that their salary payments had been stopped. This was despite there being over 3,000 released prisoners affiliated with Hamas whose salary payments have not been stopped, and who still receive them regularly... The Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs Law (i.e., the PA Prisoners’ Law) does not distinguish between prisoners of Hamas, Fatah, or any other faction... There are approximately 7,000 released prisoners from the various factions, including Hamas, whose salaries are paid regularly in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. ... The number of released prisoners from Hamas is approximately 3,000, and that the average salary of released prisoners is between 2,000 to 2,500 [Israeli] shekels...”

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, official PA daily, Dec 1, 2019]

After Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennet ordered the seizure of the salaries the PA pays to Israeli Arab terrorists³², Abu Bakr clarified that the PA’s payments are not limited to Palestinians resident in the PA-controlled areas but also include Israeli Arabs³³:

“The decision is blatant robbery and open theft of the rights of the prisoners’ families. The salaries that the commission is paying the prisoners, independent of their place of residence, are allowances that provide their families with a living, a place to live, health, education, and so on, and we will not relinquish this obligation regardless of the extremist Israeli ways of thwarting them, seizing them, or stealing them like highway robbers.”

[*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, official PA daily, Dec 26, 2019]

On Feb. 9, 2020, the Israeli Military Commander in Judea and Samaria adopted a number of provisions from Israel’s Anti-Terrorism Law, including, inter alia, a provision that prohibits the payment of rewards for the commission of acts of terror.

³¹ <https://palwatch.org/page/16995>

³² The move was initiated by PMW - <https://palwatch.org/page/17076>

³³ <https://palwatch.org/page/17170>

As the legislation was due to come into effect³⁴, PMW, wrote³⁵ to the banks operating in the PA-controlled areas and warned that the new legislation also prohibited them from assisting the PA in paying the rewards to the terrorists. According to PMW's letter, the banks were required to immediately cease operating bank accounts on behalf of the terrorist prisoners, or potentially face both criminal sanctions and civil law suits.

In an attempt to justify the payment, Abu Bakr referred³⁶ to the provisions of Israel's Anti-terrorism law as acts of piracy:

"The talk in Israel about passing a new occupation law that considers the money paid to the prisoners forbidden money is a continuation of the Israeli policy of piracy and unruliness against the rights of our prisoner fighters for freedom. The prisoners' cause is a top national priority and that we will not agree to it being harmed or to attempts to define it as crime through such racist and terrorist laws..."

[Amad, independent Palestinian news website, April 21, 2020]

Announcing the decision of PA Prime Minister Mahmoud Shtayyeh to create a special committee, that include Abu Bakr, to explore potential solutions to the new anti-terror legislation, official PA Government Spokesman Ibrahim Melhem, stated³⁷ that the PA will continue "to be loyal to the prisoners and Martyrs and protect their rights, regardless of the pressures":

"[PA] Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh ordered to assemble a committee led by [PA] Monetary Authority Governor [Azzam Al-Shawa], which includes [PA] Minister of Prisoners' Affairs [Qadri Abu Bakr], the banking association, and a representative from the [PA] Ministry of Finance in order to examine the Israeli threats against the banks that are providing their services to the relatives of the prisoners and Martyrs and to submit the needed recommendations to deal with them... The [PA] government emphasizes its rejection of submitting to the Israeli pressures, and that it will continue to be loyal to the prisoners and Martyrs and protect their rights, regardless of the pressures. It also emphasizes that the solution to this crisis regarding the banks is a collective solution and not an individual one."

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, May 8, 2020]

³⁴ The legislation came into effect on May 9, 2020.

³⁵ <https://palwatch.org/page/17790>

³⁶ <https://palwatch.org/page/17896>

³⁷ <https://palwatch.org/page/17910>

Despite the new legislation and notwithstanding the creation of the new committee, Abu Bakr nonetheless promised³⁸ that the terrorist salaries will continue no matter what:

“The salaries and rights of the prisoners, their families, and the released prisoners among them will naturally be transferred monthly. The prisoners’ rights are anchored in law and at the highest levels,... the [PA] governmental office is committed to serving the prisoners and their relatives... the commission will seek all the possibilities to ensure the salaries reach the prisoners and released prisoners.”

[Facebook page of the PLO Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs, May 8, 2020]

In another response to the anti-terrorism legislation, Abu Bakr stated³⁹ that the “public Palestinian position” regarding the PA salary payments is clear, since the terrorists are “**heroes**”:

“The salaries of the prisoners and released prisoners cannot be harmed... The public Palestinian position regarding the occupation’s theft and threats against the prisoners and their families is clear to everyone, because **they are heroes** who have sacrificed their lives for the freedom of our homeland and our people. They will not receive anything from us other than full loyalty...”

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, May 15, 2020]

It is important to note that Executive Order 13224, in addition to designating as terror supporters those who provide concrete aid to terrorists such as “financial, material, or technological support,” also designates those who provide “other services to or in support of acts of terrorism.” Clearly Abu Bakr’s daily support for terrorists, glorifying terrorists as “heroes,” repeatedly meeting with and honoring the mother of 6 terrorist murderers, are all “services... in support of acts of terrorism.”

Expenditure on the Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs under Abu Bakr

According to financial documents published by the PA, under the directorship of Abu Bakr, the expenditure of the Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs for the years 2018 - 2019 was 1,355,856,000 shekels⁴⁰. Of that sum, 1,020,132,000 shekels⁴¹ was paid to the terrorist prisoners and released prisoners.

³⁸ <https://palwatch.org/page/17933>

³⁹ <https://palwatch.org/page/17933>

⁴⁰ Equivalent to \$395,668,189 (based on Dollar to Shekel exchange rate 16/7/20)

⁴¹ Equivalent to \$297,696,644 (based on Dollar to Shekel exchange rate 16/7/20)

In 2018⁴², the total expenditure of the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs was 736,729,000 shekels, of which 502,697,000⁴³ shekels was paid to the terrorist prisoners and released prisoners.

In 2019⁴⁴, the total expenditure of the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs was 619,127,000 shekels, of which 517,435,000⁴⁵ shekels was paid to the terrorist prisoners and released prisoners.

Since the beginning of 2020, the PA has removed the Ministry of Prisoners/Commission of Detainee Affairs from its public accounting.

Nonetheless, public statements of PA officials prove beyond doubt that the PA is still paying the salaries of the terrorist prisoners and released prisoners.

First and foremost, the response of Abu Bakr to Israel's new anti-terror legislation, in May 2020 mentioned above: "The salaries of the prisoners and released prisoners cannot be harmed."

Similar proof is found in a statement of the PA Prime Minister, Mahmoud Shtayyeh, at the end of March 2020. Under the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, Shtayyeh announced⁴⁶ that the PA salaries for the month of March would be paid in a staggered manner, so as to avoid unnecessary congregating. Terrorist prisoners, released prisoners and families of dead terrorists ranked 3rd in the line of payments, and were prioritized before, for example, teachers and public employees:

"We will pay the salaries for this month [March] in full and over the course of several days in order to prevent gatherings in front of the banks, and this [will be] in the following manner:

- On the first day, the salaries of the medical and supporting personnel will be paid.
- On the second day, to the [PA] Security Forces members.
- On the third day, to the **prisoners and [the families of] the Martyrs**.
- On the fourth day, to welfare cases and the poor.
- On the fifth day, to the teachers.

⁴² <http://www.pmf.ps/pmf/documents/accounts/monthly/2018/Dec.%202018.en.pdf>, p.7. Listed as "Ministry of Prisoners Affairs".

⁴³ <https://palwatch.org/page/15217>

⁴⁴ <http://www.pmf.ps/pmf/documents/accounts/monthly/2019/Dec.%202019-updated--v3.pdf>, p. 11. Listed as "Commission of detainees Affairs"

⁴⁵ <https://palwatch.org/page/17309>

⁴⁶ <https://palwatch.org/page/17674>

- On the sixth day, to the rest of the [PA] public employees.
The last payment, on the seventh day, will be to senior officials, to high level state employees, and to the ministers.”

[Wafa, Official PA news agency, March 29, 2020]

While the PA no longer list the Ministry of Prisoners/Commission of Detainee Affairs in its monthly budget reporting, the funds previously being transferred to the Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs, are now being transferred via the PLO⁴⁷.

Conclusion:

The PA/PLO Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs is the PA/PLO entity that pays salaries to terrorist prisoners and released prisoners. Qadri Abu Bakr, as Director of the PA/PLO Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs, is personally responsible for supervising and assuring the payment of salaries to terrorist prisoners and released prisoners. These payments are defined by TFA as an “incentive to commit acts of terror.”

One goal of TFA was to strengthen the US’ war on international terror. An important tool of US anti-terror policy is Executive Order 13224, which provide the basis to sanction both individuals and entities involved in terror. It is both a logical and important next step in the US war on terror, to immediately apply Executive Order 13224 to Palestinians and entities that violate the terms of TFA by incentivizing terror: the PA/PLO Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs, the entity that pays salaries to terrorist prisoners and it director Qadri Abu Bakr.

⁴⁷ <https://palwatch.org/page/17901>