UN bodies receive millions from ‘terror charities’

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<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-752998>

[The United Nations](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-752827) has a terrorism problem.

Last month, its Security Council refused to designate as a global terrorist the architect behind the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which killed 170 people.

Just over two weeks ago, the UN’s Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, who has previously appeared on the Hezbollah-affiliated Al Mayadeen channel, issued a report that was praised by [the terrorist group Hamas](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-752980).

Until today, the UN has actively failed to define terrorism, affording terrorists impunity on a daily basis. Not only does the UN have a problem identifying terrorism when it is right in front of them, but in some cases the UN has even partnered with terrorism-affiliated groups.

Over the last year, four United Nations agencies have partnered with and accepted $7 million from the terrorism-affiliated NGO Qatar Charity. According to the Counter Extremism Project (that maintains databases on extremist groups, their ideology, leaders, history, financing, violent activities, tactics, and rhetoric), the Qatar Charity is a member charity of the Union of Good network.

The Union of Good umbrella organization was banned by the US Treasury in 2008 because of its status as ‘an organization created by Hamas leadership to transfer funds to [Hamas]’ during the Second Intifada. Hamas is on the US State Department list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

‘Terrorist groups such as Hamas continue to exploit charities to radicalize vulnerable communities and cultivate support for their violent activities,’ said then-US undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Stuart Levey, at the time. The Qatar Charity has been banned by five Middle Eastern countries.

**UN undermined by ties to ‘terrorist charity’**

Regardless of whether those funds actually further violence, the UN’s ties to the Qatar Charity irredeemably taint its ability to fight terrorism and stain its integrity as a human rights body.

The UN’s decision to continue these partnerships despite knowing about Qatar Charity’s terrorism status makes it all the more egregious. In 2017, the Secretary General’s Office acknowledged that it knew of the Qatar Charity’s designation. In fact, [Secretary-General Antonio Guterres](https://www.jpost.com/international/internationalrussia-ukraine-war/article-752270), actually chaired the UNHCR as high commissioner when the agency first partnered with the Qatar Charity in 2012.

The UNHCR – the UN’s refugee agency – remains the biggest recent UN recipient of Qatar Charity funding. In March, the two signed a letter of intent for a project worth over $5 million. The project will, reportedly, help displaced families in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Yemen, but given the Qatar Charity’s impropriety, one would not be mistaken for exercising skepticism as to where the money will actually go.

It’s not the first time the UNHCR has partnered with the Qatar Charity. Between 2012 and 2022, the UNHCR received roughly $49 million from the Qatar Charity and around $4.5 million from the Eid Charity in recent years. Even by UN standards, the Eid Charity is also terrorism-tied. Its co-founder – Abdul Rahman Al Nuaimi – is a UN-designated terrorist.

In June, UNWRA the UN Relief and Works Agency a UN refugee agency dedicated solely to Palestinians (as distinct from UNHCR, dedicated to all the rest of the refugees in the world) also signed a partnership with the Qatar Charity worth $1.17 million.

In 2021, UN Watch exposed 100 UNRWA employees for inciting violence and antisemitism online. UNRWA child educators have reportedly glorified Hitler and terrorism, while UNRWA textbooks have glorified violent jihad and characterized Jews as enemies of Islam. The Qatar Charity partnered with UNRWA at least thrice between 2013 and 2022. Their partnerships during that time frame alone amounted to at least $4.5 million.

The next notable recent recipient of Qatar Charity’s aid is the UN’s International Organization of Migration (IOM). In January 2023, they signed a joint agreement worth $500,000 to provide financial assistance in Yemen. Their joint partnership projects between 2007 and 2016, which also appeared to have included the World Food Program were otherwise valued at least 7.8 million USD.

The most recent recipient worthy of mention is the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which on December 5, 2022, finalized an agreement with the Qatar Charity worth 1.3 million Qatari Riyals (approximately $357,000). The partnership aims to provide water and sanitation services in Yemen. This might be the first partnership for these organizations.

Other United Nations programs that have historically benefitted from Qatar Charity’s aid include UNICEF, the UN Development Program (UNDP), the UN World Food Program (WFP), and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

It may be tempting to assume that the Qatar Charity’s contributions to the UN are simply charitable. However, Qatari-based charities have exploited the halo of charity to fund and engage terrorists.

Documents uncovered by the Middle East Forum indicate that, in recent years, the Eid Charity gave approximately $75 million to affiliates of extremist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Hamas, and Insani Yardim Vakfi. Like the Qatar Charity, the Eid Charity is also banned by five Middle Eastern countries.

Even charities run by the Qatari government engage terrorists; it has given $1.8 billion to Hamas since 2012. The chairman of the Qatar Committee for Reconstruction of Gaza, Ambassador Mohammed Al Emadi, has personally hosted senior leaders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad at his residence, despite the PIJ’s refusal to ‘participate in the political process,’ as noted by the Council on Foreign Relations. PIJ leadership expressed appreciation for Qatar’s role in Gaza while visiting Emadi in 2019.

In sum, the UN’s decision to partner with terrorism-affiliated charities, such as the Qatar Charity, irredeemably taints its legitimacy as a human-rights body, as a bastion for international law, and as a dependable forum for conflict mediation.

World leaders must audit United Nations funding and question the UN and its calls to action until it cleans house.