**PA prioritizes terror payments over welfare as coronavirus curbs budget**

By: Donna Rachel Edmunds

Jerusalem Post

April 1, 2020

<https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/PA-prioritizes-terror-payments-over-welfare-as-coronavirus-curbs-budget-623162>

The Palestinian Authority has opted to pay the salaries of terrorists before those of teachers and social welfare recipients, as it anticipates a drop in revenue as a result of the coronavirus crisis, according to Palestinian Media Watch (PMW).

The Palestinian Authority is expecting a 50% decrease in income as a result of the virus' impact, anticipating that governments around the world will decrease their international aid payments during the crisis. Accordingly, PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh has announced that March's payments to public servants and welfare recipients will be staggered across the course of a week in early April.

PMW has translated a report by the official Palestinian news agency, WAFA, which on March 29 reported the schedule as follows: Medical and supporting personnel to be paid on Monday, and Security Forces staff on Monday, while on Tuesday, prisoners and the families of the martyrs are to receive their stipend.

This means that payments to terrorists are being prioritized ahead of welfare payments, which are to be made on Wednesday, teachers' salaries, to be paid on Thursday, and public servants, who will receive theirs on Friday. Ministers and senior officials will be receiving their payments on Saturday.

"It is clear that the PA sees the payments as a statement of priorities since they put medical personnel as first recipients and security services second and this is logical. However, their putting terrorists third before welfare cases and teachers shows the tragedy of the PA value system. Terrorists still reign as PA heroes," Itamar Marcus, Director of Palestinian Media Watch said.

In 2019, the Palestinian Authority spent, on average, more than NIS 50,000,000 (approximately $14,000,000) on payments to jailed terrorists and the families of those killed. Based on figures from the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the figure could buy 387,143 coronavirus test kits, or 465 low-cost MIT ventilators.

However the PA has a history of prioritizing terror payments over the welfare of Palestinians. In 2019, a financial crisis forced the Authority to cut payments to public servants, even while committing to paying in full terrorists salaries and pensions for the families of dead terrorists.

According to research by Palestinian Media Watch, the PA spends six times more of its budget to terror payments than it does to welfare payments.