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UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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December 1, 2009

Secretary Hillary Clinton
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, it has been brought to my attention that an organization known as Viva Palestina, headed by Mr. George Galloway, may be soliciting funds for Hamas, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization. Mr. Galloway, a member of the British Parliament, has made several trips to the United States to solicit funds for Viva Palestina. Clearly, this allegation is most serious, and I request that you investigate it immediately to determine whether Mr. Galloway and his foreign associates should have any outstanding visas revoked and any future admittance into the United States barred pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B), and whether Viva Palestina, its affiliates, and its leadership should be designated under Executive Order 13224 as supporters of a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

Viva Palestina itself is not a 501(c)(3) entity, and my staff could not determine whether the organization has any legal status in the United States. According to its website, it seeks fundraising to “plan and execute a North American Aid Convoy to Gaza”.¹

Viva Palestina apparently uses a 501(c)(3) conduit, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations/Pastors for Peace (IFCO), to accept charitable donations claiming that it has “formed a fiduciary partnership with . . . (IFCO)”.² The assumption follows that IFCO is cooperating with Viva Palestina; however, an investigation is required to confirm that IFCO is actually sending money back to Viva Palestina.

Viva Palestina’s website indicates that Mr. Galloway is the leader of the Viva Palestina convoys.³ In addition, he has frequently spoken publicly on the organization’s

¹ <http://www.vivapalestina-us.org/about> (accessed on October 20, 2009)

² <http://www.vivapalestina-us.org/donate> (accessed on October 20, 2009); “In order for [the donor] to have the maximum benefit for [his or her] contribution, we have formed a fiduciary partnership with the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations/Pastors for Peace (IFCO). . . . [The] donation to Viva Palestina - IFCO is fully tax deductible under IFCO's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.”

³ <http://vivapalestina-us.org/register/conditions> (accessed on October 20, 2009); “The Convoy Leaders are identified as follows: Mr. George Galloway MP, and in his absence, Mr. Ron Kovic, and in his absence, Mr. Kevin Ovenden.”



behalf. During one of the organization's Gaza convoys on March 10, 2009, George Galloway made the following statement to what is presumably a delegation of Hamas officials:

Just in case the British government or European Union want to face me in any court, let me tell them live on television, I personally am about to break the sanctions on the elected government of Palestine. By Allah, we have carried a lot of cash. You thought that we were all fat. We are not fat. This is money that we have around our waists. They gave sweets and cigarettes to the inspectors and when the inspectors' backs were turned, they put back on the vehicles that which the inspectors had taken off the vehicles. Some of the inspectors were happy to turn their backs.

We are giving you now 100 vehicles and all of the contents and we make no apology for what I am about to say. We are giving them to the elected government of Palestine, to Prime Minister Ismail Haniya.⁴ Here is the money. **This is not charity. This is politics.** The government of Palestine is the best people where this money is needed. We are giving this money now to the government of Palestine. If I could, I would give them 10 times, 100 times, more. [emphasis added]⁵

This statement, which is widely available to the public on YouTube, is compelling evidence that the major purpose of Viva Palestina is to provide material support to Hamas.

The Zionist Organization of America has provided to my office a videotape of Mr. Galloway soliciting funds at the University of California at Irvine on behalf of Viva Palestina on May 21, 2009. In this tape Mr. Galloway states:

The convoy is the first thing . . . If you can't come, then help those who are fundraising to send others. There are many ways that you can do it . . . Please take it. It's a small colored leaflet, Viva Palestina USA, which tells you how you can raise the funds, how you can help this great cause.⁶

This is not acceptable. *The borders of the United States should not remain open to individuals that provide support to recognized terror organizations.* Please act so that Mr. Galloway and others who solicit funds for terrorist organizations do not receive visas to visit the United States, and determine whether Viva Palestina, IFCO, and their leadership should be designated as supporters of a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

⁴ According to the United States Department of State, Mr. Haniya is not a Prime Minister of any government. He is considered a high-ranking official of Hamas, a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYFGIbaabTU> (accessed on October 20, 2009)

⁶ Your staff may obtain a copy of the video by contacting Marc Berkman of my staff.



Please have your staff contact Marc Berkman of my staff at (202)225-5911 or at marc.berkman@mail.house.gov with any questions and to keep him and me updated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Sherman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress