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UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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Attorney General Eric Holder
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Holder:

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, it has been brought to my attention that an organization known as Viva Palestina USA, headed by Mr. George Galloway, may be soliciting funds for Hamas, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1189. Mr. Galloway, a member of the British Parliament, has made several trips to the United States to solicit funds for Viva Palestina USA. Clearly, this allegation is most serious, and I request that you investigate it immediately to determine whether Mr. Galloway and any of his associates or affiliated organizations have violated United States law.

Viva Palestina USA is not a 501(c)(3) entity, and my staff could not determine whether the organization has any legal status in the United States. Viva Palestina USA uses a 501(c)(3) conduit, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations/Pastors for Peace (IFCO), to accept charitable donations.¹ According to Viva Palestina's website, it seeks fundraising to "plan and execute a North American Aid Convoy to Gaza".² Based on this website, the group's foreign sister organization, Viva Palestina, has previously organized convoys to Gaza.

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 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:

¹ <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."

² <http://www.vivapalestina-us.org/about> (accessed on October 20, 2009)

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."



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 videotape of Mr. Galloway soliciting funds at the University of California at Irvine on behalf of Viva Palestina USA 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.

In light of this evidence, Mr. Galloway, Viva Palestina USA, and IFCO should be investigated immediately. Clearly, people and organizations in the United States cannot be allowed to solicit funds for foreign terrorist organizations. That such solicitation is occurring during the middle of the day at a public university is truly frightening.

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)



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