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**Congress of the United States**  
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July 30, 2020

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The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my utmost gratitude for your work towards making the United States' relationship with our friend and ally Israel stronger than it has ever been. In your groundbreaking Peace to Prosperity plan to shape a better future for both Israelis and Palestinians, it wisely states "The PLO and the Palestinian Authority should take all necessary actions to immediately terminate the paying of salaries to terrorists serving sentences in Israeli prisons, as well as to the families of deceased terrorists (collectively, the 'Prisoner and Martyr Payments')." Thanks to policies like this and many other initiatives, no administration has done more to support the Jewish people than yours.

It is my firm belief that the universally dubbed "pay for slay" payments embody the underlying reason why peace remains elusive. The idea that one party to a peace process should incentivize its people to brazenly murder innocent people in cold blood demonstrates the intentions of that party towards the "partner" it ostensibly claims to want to live alongside in peace and security.

Over the years, tens of thousands of Palestinian terrorists sitting in prison, and the families of terrorists who died while committing heinous acts of murder, have received thousands of dollars monthly from the Palestinian leadership. The payments rise over time with the terrorists, murderers, and mass murderers eventually receiving over \$3,500 a month for murdering innocents men, women, and children.

My legislation, the Taylor Force Act, conditions U.S. direct aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) on the abolition of the PA's payment of cash rewards to terrorists and their families. The Taylor Force Act, which you signed into law in 2018, was named after an American Army veteran murdered in cold blood by a Palestinian terrorist in 2016, was an attempt to disincentivize the pay-for-slay scheme, end the senseless war of terror against Israel, and serve the cause of peace.

Unfortunately, the Palestinian leadership has continued to pay the terror rewards to terrorists,

spending hundreds of millions of dollars every year to these monsters and their families. Since the passing of the Taylor Force Act, and a similar law in Israel's Knesset passed by my friends MKs Elazar Stern and Avi Dichter in July 2018, the Palestinian leadership has spent over 1.2 billion shekels, or \$350 million, continuing to reward terror.

While the Palestinian Authority is opaquely trying to conceal their 2020 payment, we have seen documented evidence, provided by the Israeli NGO Palestinian Media Watch, that pay-for-slay stipends continue. Palestinian leaders proudly admit as much regularly in Arabic.

In 2018, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said: "I say this to everyone...The Martyrs and their families are sacred, [and so are] the wounded and the prisoners. We must pay all of them. If one penny remains in our hands it is for them and not for the living." The PA is so fixated with celebrating the rewarding of terror that state-controlled Palestinian TV rebroadcast these words no less than 172 times, 155 times in 2019 alone. This is not just bluster. I have personally been provided with conclusive evidence that these payments are continuing, just as the PA has repeatedly said.

Since the Palestinian Authority leaders have publicly attacked the passage of the Taylor Force Act, rejected its terms, and continue rewarding terrorists and their families, the appropriate next step in the US war on terror is to personally sanction those PA/PLO officials involved in this incentivizing of terror, as defined by the law.

While there are many senior Palestinian officials involved in the "pay for slay" program, the institution and the person most responsible are the PA/PLO Commission of Prisoners' Affairs and its Director Qadri Abu Bakr.

In the capacity of his position as the Director of the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs, Abu Bakr has, since 2018, been directly in charge of the PA/PLO institution that pays salaries to terrorist prisoners and released terrorists. The designation of the Commission of Prisoners' Affairs and its Director Qadri Abu Bakr as sponsors of terror, in accordance with Executive Order 13224, would have a substantial declarative and practical effect. Palestinian Authority institutions and persons who fund or reward terror should be subject to the measures provided for in Executive Order 13224, which is the State Department's list of designated terrorist entities and persons.

Additionally, these payments are made to all Palestinian terrorist prisoners and released prisoners, including those who were and remain members in terrorist organizations as designated by Executive Order 13224, 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.

Over the last year, there have been many goodwill attempts by our friends and partners around the world, especially in Europe, to dissuade the Palestinian leadership from continuing these payments. Suggestions have been made to pay Palestinian families according to their economic need, or to transfer these funds towards civil society projects that will help build infrastructure

and development. They have all been rejected out of hand by Palestinian leaders, including Abu Bakr, who continue to refer to terrorists as “our heroes.”

Even as recently as May 2020, Abu Bakr said “The salaries of the prisoners and released prisoners cannot be harmed...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 our full loyalty.” The designation of the Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs and its Director Qadri Abu Bakr as sponsors of terror, in accordance with Executive Order 13224, is the only way to end the Palestinian Authority’s deliberate attempt to deceive the international community, permanently stopping pay-for-slay payments and Palestinian violent rejectionism of peace with Israel, and allow aid and assistance from the international community to provide a better future for the average Palestinian as intended.

Ending pay-for-slay payments is an initiative endorsed by multiple previous administrations, both Republican and Democrat, has received long-standing bipartisan support in Congress, and is an internationally endorsed stance. You have boldly stood up for Israel in ways past administrations lacked the courage to do. Designating the PA’s Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs and its director, Qadri Abu Bakr, as sponsors of terrorism will send the strongest of signals that the U.S. will not stand idly by as the Palestinian Authority pays terrorists and their families with American taxpayer dollars. This vile practice must end, and your administration has the courage and moral clarity to do it.

Sincerely,



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress