



Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) Counter-Terrorism Brief

The Middle Eastern Children's Alliance (MECA, EIN 94-3074600) is a California-based nonprofit that has injected >\$30M in aid to projects in Lebanon, Gaza, and the WB since 1988 under the ostensible mission of “protecting the health, lives and rights of children in the Middle East.”¹ Its Alliance of Founding Advisors includes prestigious public and academic figures ranging from Maya Angelou to Maxine Waters, Noam Chomsky, and Sen. James Abourezk.

Our investigation of MECA has yielded evidence suggesting fiscal and personnel ties to entities associated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the US government in 1997. In addition to its ties to PFLP fronts based in the Gaza Strip, MECA has of late begun facilitating fundraising for a network of extremist anti-government actors based in the United States. As NCRI exposed in an October 2024, report,² MECA has also penetrated the US public education system via its development of radical curriculum materials through the Teach Palestine project that are being taught in K-12 classrooms nationwide.

Ties to PFLP-Linked Entities

Open source analysis of MECA personnel and pages revealed that the veteran director of its Gaza programming is associated with a PFLP-linked entity, and facilitated a meeting between MECA's founder and PFLP terrorist Leila Khaled.

- **MECA's director of Gaza programming Dr. Mona Al-Farra** previously served as deputy director of the Union of Healthcare Worker Committees (UHCW),³ recognized as early as 1993 by USAID as a PFLP front organization.⁴⁵ Her author biography on CommonDreams likewise identifies her as a member of the UHCW.⁶ Over the past two decades, al-Farra has retained close ties to other PFLP-linked

¹ <https://www.mecaforpeace.org/>

² <https://networkcontagion.us/wp-content/uploads/Entryism-20241015-V1.pdf>

³ <http://www.labournet.net/world/0406/mona1.html>

⁴ <https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/union-health-workers-committee/>

⁵ <https://ngo-monitor.org/reports/union-of-health-work-committees-ties-to-the-pflp-terror-group/>

⁶ <https://www.commondreams.org/author/mona-el-farra>

organizations such as the UPWC,⁷ Gaza-based PFLP operatives like Yousef al-Salibi,⁸ and international leaders including Leila Khaled.⁹ According to NGO monitor, in 2015 al-Farrah was denied an exit visa by Israel for security reasons, and in 2004 during her tenure at the helm of UHWC she was quoted as refusing to accept USAID funding over its precondition of not being used to support militants or their families.¹⁰

- **Founder and Executive Director of MECA, Barbara Lubin**, also met Leila Khaled with al-Farra in Gaza in 2012, further testifying to the ties between MECA and PFLP leadership.¹¹

Gaza-based charities and initiatives that are financially supported by MECA (e.g. Afaq Jadida, Never Stop Dreaming) are connected to the PFLP's military and political wings. Both Afaq Jadida and Never Stop Dreaming have received on and off funding from MECA from between FYE2012 through FYE2023, according to public 990s provided by ProPublica.¹² The two organizations have collaborated on a number of projects together alongside the Union of Palestinian Women Committees (UPWC), a recognized PFLP-linked subsidiary.^{13 14}

Furthermore, on the basis of open-source analysis, their programming appears significantly supported by MECA and is overlapping to some extent, as evidenced by shared employees and joint initiatives. Additional evidence that links Afaq Jadeeda and Never Stop Dreaming to PFLP entities includes:

- In June 2023, Afaq Jadeeda made a post that memorialized Mansour Thabet, a PFLP General Central Committee member, who is also identified as a founder of Afaq (right).¹⁵ According to a 2009 article published by Maan News, Afaq Jadeeda participated in the Martyr Mansour Thabet memorial sports tournament organized by the PFLP and attended by the UHWC.¹⁶

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=4608559044825&set=pb.1017925494.-2207520000>

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1747104175391853&set=pb.100002768632055.-2207520000&type=3>

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=4608559044825&set=pb.1017925494.-2207520000>

¹⁰ <https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/union-health-workers-committee/>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=4611270552611&set=pb.1017925494.-2207520000>

¹² Consult <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/943074600/> for a YoY breakdown.

¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1E8TuMSwA6/>, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14u1XuTiiZL/>

¹⁴ <https://ngo-monitor.org/ngos/union-of-palestinian-womens-committees-upwc/>

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=657851199702309&set=a.630477149106381>

¹⁶ <https://www.maannews.net/news/174703.html>

- A May 2023 dance performance held at the Ghassan Kanafani kindergarten in Bureij that featured a martyrdom poster on stage for Uday Riyadh al-Louh, a slain PFLP militant. The PFLP militant was eulogized in a separate Afaq Jadeeda post as the son of a sitting board member (left),¹⁷ thereby tightening the institutional affinity between the charity and the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigade.¹⁸
- Other children's programs hosted by Afaq have explicitly advocated for violence against Jews, including hosting an Intifada summer camp in 2016 that simulated carrying out terrorist attacks against Jews.¹⁹
- A year later, Afaq Jadeeda participated in a ceremony honoring Ahmad Saadat, the imprisoned Secretary General of the PFLP.²⁰ In the ceremony, kindergarten-aged children were photographed posing with handguns and fake weapons as they cosplayed PFLP terrorists held in Israeli custody.
- At least one employee of the two charities, 'Atia Abu Jamal, is a suspected militant in the the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the PFLP's militant wing in Gaza. On his personal Facebook he is listed as employed as children's coordinator by both Afaq Jadeeda and Never Stop Dreaming. In another Facebook picture, he is holding an M-4 carbine with military grade scopes.²¹ He has also shared multiple promotional reels for the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the PFLP's militant wing in Gaza, including one where he is shown posing with a gun.²² In May 2023 he served as a pallbearer at the funeral of fellow PFLP militant 'Adi Riyadh al-Louh, a member of the Ali Abu Mustafa Brigade's missile unit who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Nusseirat, Gaza.²³ Soon thereafter in August 2023 Abu Jamal was personally presented with an award by Dr. Mona al-Farra, and has been photographed with her at charity events on numerous occasions.²⁴

¹⁷https://www.facebook.com/Afaq.Jadeeda.Association/photos/a.632574590186159/5851111018332464/?type=3&mibextid=WaXdOe&rdid=GuRLN6Ub1X3vWvFP&share_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fshare%2F1DQdv1mtEJ%2F%3Fmibextid%3DWaXdOe#

¹⁸<https://www.facebook.com/Afaq.Jadeeda.Association/posts/pfbid02oSMbNQ8JjwEPHRMtTHHdza3Faz6327HD4miS4q9o9DLHSUtkBW5BZtfAxAoJiUNel>, <https://www.maannnews.net/news/2093187.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/Afaq.Jadeeda.Association/videos/805359102907706>

²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1135028066607473&set=pb.100064323056325.-2207520000>, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=805359102907706>

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=870360150025273&set=ecnf.100011538883051>

²² <http://facebook.com/reel/776571487339997>, <https://www.facebook.com/reel/906251143768200>

²³https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02iHRZhmEccpDGKjyFZVW3cAFG2RiMXyVcWtUDGS4CSm5QrB65tmiH7mfB3u8bE2pEI&id=100011538883051, <https://qudspress.com/47867/>, <https://qudspress.com/47733/>

²⁴https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0zW5LCVrBGgYM7bAWy1mL4QKrWuB3fqWyMwFNZKGGqZ3uQNWzmcRrfvcYb3jtTMCil&id=100011538883051

Fiscal Support of Terror-Linked Entities: As reported in its publicly available 990s, MECA has made grants to entities with ties to US-designated terrorist organizations including:

- **Subsidiaries of the PFLP** such as the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (**UAWC**), Union of Health Workers Committees (**UHCW**), and the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (**UPWC**) were listed as receiving MECA grants in publicly available 990s.²⁵ Following the blacklisting of some of these organizations by the Israeli government in 2021, the Netherlands also cut off funding to UAWC due to the discovery of significant membership overlap with known PFLP operatives.²⁶ Despite these terror financing suspicions, MECA's 2022 990 discloses a grant made to UHCW.²⁷
- **PFLP-Linked Charities:** MECA's 990s also show direct and consistent contributions to Gaza-based charities that function as PFLP-front organizations such as Afaq Jadeeda and Never Stop Dreaming. As discussed above, open-source findings suggest that Afaq Jadeeda and Never Stop Dreaming are part of the network of charities and social welfare programs run by the PFLP in the Gaza Strip.
- **Freedom Theater in Jenin** has received funding from MECA as recently as in its FYE2023 990. The Freedom Theater has close familial ties to terrorism in the Jenin area and has long been the target of Israeli counter-terrorism operations. Zakaria Zubeidi, a leader of the Jenin al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade who was released in early 2025 as part of a prisoner exchange deal, is a co-founder of the theater and his brother, Abdulrahman Zubeidi,²⁸ currently serves as the chairman of the FT's board.²⁹ Yahya Zubeidi, a third brother, has been detained by Israeli forces twice in the past two years over terror accusations. In recent years numerous Zubeidi clan members including Muhammad Zubeidi, a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative in the Jenin camp, have been arrested or killed by Israeli forces in counter-terror operations.³⁰

²⁵ <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/943074600/202211369349314326/full>

²⁶ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/6/dutch-government-ends-funding-to-palestinian-civil-society-group>

²⁷ <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/943074600/202332879349300303/full>

²⁸ http://kibush.co.il/show_file.asp?num=79860

²⁹ <https://thefreedomtheatre.org/the-team/>

³⁰ <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-taxpayer-funds-pro-bds-arts-company-founded-by-terrorist-glghvk0k> , https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/military-says-2-senior-terror-operatives-killed-in-west-bank-operation/

Fiscal Ties to US-based Extremist Groups: MECA has both accepted funds from and helped fundraise for US-based extremist groups and actors including:

- **As of April 1, 2025, MECA was listed as a partner³¹ in a target fundraising campaign initiated by the Shut It Down for Palestine (SID4P) coalition that has collected >\$1.5M to date.** NCRI has previously exposed SID4P as an extremist far-left/Islamist coalition that enjoys fiscal and organizational ties to foreign threat actors including the Chinese Communist Party and PFLP.³² Key convenors of the SID4P coalition such as the Peoples Forum and the Palestinian Youth Movement have recently been recommended for DOJ investigation over potential FARA violations.³³
- **Alleged reception of a \$100K grant from Fergie Chambers in 2023.**³⁴ Chambers is the founder of the violent direct-action group PalAction US (aka Unity of Fields) and is a self-declared far-left Shi'a militant based in Tunisia since late-2023.³⁵ In October 2024, Marco Rubio recommended Unity of Fields for DOJ investigation over allegations of its engagement in domestic terrorist activity.³⁶

Promotion of Radical Education Materials:

- MECA created the **Teach Palestine**³⁷ curriculum for K-12 educators that has enjoyed widespread circulation through its adoption by Rethinking Schools³⁸ and its sponsored Zinn Education Project,³⁹ which claims to be used by >160000 teachers and teacher educators nationwide.⁴⁰ Sample lesson plans include one on “Youth Incarceration and Resistance” for a Middle School audience⁴¹ while whitewashing Hamas as a ‘political entity’ for High Schoolers.⁴²

³¹ <https://www.shutitdown4palestine.org/>

³² <https://networkcontagion.us/reports/ccp-influence-and-radical-ideologies/>

³³ <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/press/rep/releases/icymi-graham-rubio-to-ag-garland-provide-update-on-efforts-to-counter-ccp-propaganda-operations>

³⁴ <https://x.com/jccfergie/status/1711315508367106543>

³⁵ <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/fergie-chambers-cox-enterprises-heir-overthrow-us-1234983156/>

³⁶ <https://x.com/SenMarcoRubio/status/1846946478171828455>

³⁷ <https://nypost.com/2024/10/26/us-news/anti-israel-foreign-actors-activists-have-infiltrated-nyc-schools-report/>

³⁸ <https://rethinkingschools.org/event/teach-palestine/>

³⁹ <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/teaching-palestine-israel>

⁴⁰ <https://www.zinnedproject.org/about/>

⁴¹ <https://teachpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Unit-Outline-Youth-Incarceration-and-Resistance-in-Palestine.pdf>

⁴² <https://teachpalestine.org/teaching-palestine-israel/> ; see file Shoman_15.2_Conflict Continues Power Point.

- MECA is also listed as a past donor to San Francisco State University's Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas degree program,⁴³ which is headed by national BDS organizer Rabab Abdulhadi. In 2018, Abdulhadi was the recipient of an award by MECA amidst an antisemitism lawsuit filed by Jewish SFSU students alleging discrimination.⁴⁴ In the years since, Abdulhadi has continued come under fire for her ties to foreign terror operatives and her use of public university channels to amplify them, such as the PFLP Leila Khaled⁴⁵ and Islamic Jihad's Sami al-Arian.⁴⁶ In 2011, Leena Al-Arian, daughter of convicted Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist and financier Sami Al-Arian, was listed as a Communications Coordinator for MECA.⁴⁷

⁴³ <https://amed.sfsu.edu/donor-recognition>

⁴⁴ <https://www.thelawfareproject.org/releases/2018/5/30/march-2019-trial-date-set-for-lawsuit-alleging-anti-semitism-against-san-francisco-state-university-in-california-state-court?rq=rabab>

⁴⁵ <https://x.com/thestustustudio/status/1732207276256067943>

⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/DefendProfAbdulhadi/videos/1196893214145632> (see from 1:10:00)

⁴⁷ <https://www.mecaforpeace.org/media-advisory-censored-palestinian-childrens-exhibit-to-open-outside-of-museum/>