



Palestinian Authority “Pay for Slay” Fact Sheet

Introduction

The Palestinian Authority (PA) [tells](#) foreign audiences that they oppose terrorism, yet they pay generous rewards to Palestinians, and/or their families, who carry out bombings, stabbings and other attacks against innocents in Israel. This has been labeled the “Pay for Slay” program. This has included the terrorists, or their families, of those who have killed at least 69 American citizens. Because the U.S. provides aid to the PA, the U.S. is indirectly paying for this terrorism.

Pay for Slay Laws

According to “[Amended Palestinian Prisoners Law No. 19 \(2004\)](#),” which are [Palestinian laws passed in 2004 and amended in 2013](#), Palestinians and Israeli Arabs who are convicted by Israel of involvement in terror attacks in Israel - “[participation in the struggle against the occupation](#)” - are entitled to monthly “salaries” commencing with their arrest - and continuing for life for men who serve at least five years and women who serve at least two - along with additional cash grants for such things as tuition fees at government schools and universities, health insurance, and priority civil-service job placements upon their release. The PA law specifies that the financial support is for the “[fighting sector](#),” an “[integral part of the fabric of Arab Palestinian society](#).” Basically, the law [dictates](#) that the deadlier the terror attack, the richer the reward.

The total payments from the PA for Pay for Slay [equaled](#) \$315 million in 2016, or 8% of the PA budget of \$4.4 billion. This sum is divided into [two separate payments](#): 1) the Prisoners and Released Prisoners Ministry to administer this program of support, which received a budget allocation of \$118 million in 2014 and \$140 million in 2016; and 2) the Institution for the Care for the Families of the Martyrs to provide for the families of dead terrorists, which was allocated \$163 million in 2014 and \$175 million in 2016. For individual payments, the salaries start at \$400 per month for terrorists incarcerated for up to three years. They rise to \$570 per month for those incarcerated for three to five years, and \$1,142 per month for five to 10 years. For those serving more than 30 years, the salary is \$3,429 per month. The gross national product per capita amount in the West Bank is \$258 per month. For one-time grants to released prisoners, these start at \$1,500 for terrorists who served one to three years and rise to \$6,000 for those with 11-to-15-year terms, and \$25,000 for those who served over 30 years. Bonuses [are paid if](#) the terrorists are Israeli Arabs or Arab residents of Jerusalem. There are more than 500 civil servants dedicated to disbursing these funds.

The ministry in the Palestinian government called the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners was originally responsible for awarding and allocating the funds for terrorists. But after the U.S. Congress passed a law in 2014 to defund the PA if they continued to fund Pay for Slay, the PA cynically [shifted](#) the money to the PLO and changed the ministry’s name - but [not its function](#) - to the PLO Commission of Prisoners Affairs.

Recent Increase in Pay for Slay

In defiance of the U.S., the PA [is increasing](#) the payments to the “Martyrs” and/or their families. Muhammad Sbeihat, the Secretary-General of the National Association of the Martyrs' Families of Palestine, explained: “In the upcoming period the allowances of the Martyrs' families will be linked to the cost of living index, which will cause an improvement in these allowances, if only slightly.” [*Al-Quds*, April 4, 2017]

U.S. Aid to the Palestinians

Since the establishment of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the mid-1990s, the U.S. government [has committed](#) more than \$5 billion in bilateral economic and non-lethal security assistance to the Palestinians. From FY2008 to the present, annual Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to the West Bank and Gaza Strip has **averaged around \$400 million**, with much of this going toward the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-administered project assistance (through grants and contracts), and the rest toward budget support for the Palestinian Authority (PA). Annual International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) non-lethal assistance for PA security forces and the criminal justice sector in the West Bank has averaged approximately \$100 million.

The U.S. provides three streams of money to the Palestinians. They are: 1) aid to UNRWA; 2) security aid to the PA; and 3) indirect economic aid to the PA. **Technically, the U.S. no longer pays economic aid directly to the Palestinian Authority, because the U.S. was disturbed by the PA corruption and use of economic aid for terrorism.** Instead, the U.S. gives two different sums: a) aid to USAID, which provides indirect funding for things the PA should be doing, like building roads, etc.; and b) direct payments to the creditors of the PA.

Taylor Force

Beneficiaries of Pay for Slay include the family of Bashar Masalha, who in 2016 stabbed 11 people near Tel Aviv. Among those he killed was 28-year-old Taylor Force, a U.S. Army veteran. Force graduated from West Point in 2009 and later became an officer in the U.S. Army until leaving in 2014. While in the army, Force served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Force, an MBA student, was in Israel, traveling with other graduate students from Vanderbilt University, where he was studying global entrepreneurship. Israeli police killed Masalha, but his relatives now receive [monthly payments](#).

The Taylor Force Act is HR 1164 in the House and S. 474 in the Senate. It conditions *all* U.S. economic support funds for the PA on the PA's behavior. It [prohibits](#) U.S. aid to the PA until the State Department certifies the PA is: "taking steps to end violence," like that which took the life of Taylor Force; "publicly condemning such acts of violence;" and "has terminated payments for acts of terrorism." **The new law would not affect U.S. security assistance to the PA, which remains separate from these funds.**

Statements Supporting the Taylor Force Act and Opposing Pay for Slay:

- [PM Netanyahu's Remarks](#) at the Start of the Weekly Cabinet Meeting, 18 June (Communicated by the Prime Minister's Media Adviser): "On behalf of the Government and the nation, I would like to send condolences from the depths of my heart to the family of Border Police fighter, the late Hadas Malka. ...Instead of condemning the attack, Fatah – which is headed by Abu Mazen – issued a statement in which it condemn the Border Police fighters who killed the terrorists, and praised the murderers as heroes. It seems that mendacity and brazen gall know no bounds. Of course, the Palestinian Authority is refusing to condemn the murder and the same Authority will now pay financial compensation to the murderers' families. I call on the countries of the world to condemn both the murder and those who praise it, and demand the immediate cessation of Palestinian Authority payments to the families of terrorists, something that only encourages terror."
- Israeli Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked [encouraged](#) U.S. efforts to pressure the PA to end the practice of Pay for Slay. Shaked said that Israel "definitely needs" the United States' help to put an end to the practice, while speaking at the Hudson Institute. Shaked added that Israel would be "grateful" for the passage of the Taylor Force Act.
- Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY), the minority leader in the Senate, [told](#) attendants at the Orthodox Union's annual Washington action day in June that he would support the Taylor Force Act or similar legislation if the Trump administration is unable to get the PA to stop the payments. "Abbas has to stop making payments to terrorists and their families, and all elected officials should call them out," Schumer said.

- Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD), the top Democrat on the Senate’s Foreign Relations Committee, [said in June](#): “We’re going to find a way to pass the Taylor Force Act.” Cardin suggested that he wanted changes to the bill before he could fully endorse it.

PA Statements Supporting Pay for Slay

- PLO Prisoners’ Affairs’ Commission director: “In response to American Secretary of State [Rex Tillerson’s] statements about stopping the allowances... Karake emphasized that the Palestinian leadership will not submit to any pressure, and that the aid to the families of the prisoners and Martyrs is a national, moral, and human responsibility. He also rejected all the terms and concepts that define the prisoners and Martyrs as ‘terrorists.’”
- PLO Prisoners’ Affairs’ Commission director [April 29, 2017]: “The President [Abbas] emphasized his absolute refusal of the Israeli demands to stop the allowances of the families of the prisoners and Martyrs (*Shabids*), and emphasized his absolute support for them (i.e., for the payments).”
- PA Ministry of Information: “Martyrs” deserve payments because they are not “highway robbers, but people who sacrificed their lives and freedom.”
- PLO official Ahmed Majdalani: “... calmed the prisoners and Martyrs’ families [saying] that the Palestinian leadership will not submit to the occupation’s laws and will continue to be loyal to the Martyrs’ blood and the prisoners’ suffering.”

Similar Israeli Legislation

On June 14, a bill similar to the Taylor Force Act [passed](#) the Israeli Knesset. The Israeli bill imposes a dollar-for-dollar deduction in the amount of tax revenues Israel transfers to the PA based on the PA’s spending on terror payments -- approximately \$300M a year. The bill is supported by MKs from both coalition and opposition parties and now heads to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee for preparation for final passage.

Polling on the Issue

A new poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion under the direction of David Pollock of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a centrist think tank, [found](#): The PA has claimed that popular pressure compels it to persist in Pay for Slay. However, the survey shows that two-thirds of Palestinians think “the PA should give prisoners’ families normal social benefits like everybody else, not extra payments based on their sentences or armed operations.” Among West Bankers, the exact figure is 65.9%; among Gazans, 67.2%.