

**Committee for Fundamental Rights
and Democracy**

Responsible for the Project "Vacation from War"

Helga Dieter Flussgasse8 D 60489 Frankfurt

D 50670 Köln

Tel. #49-69-789-2525, Fax #49-69-78803666, mob. #49 172 6932525 ubihedi@t-online.de

www.vacation-from-war.com and www.ferien-vom-krieg.de and www.grundrechtekomitee.de

SUMMARY:

Since 1994, the German "Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy" has financed vacation programs for children and young people from regions in conflict through the program "Vacation from War" and, additionally, a summer games program for children from Palestine. On June 22, 2007, \$8,000 in private donations from Germany and the USA were transferred to a humanitarian organization in Nablus in the West Bank with the remark "summer games." On June 26, the Committee's bank received a letter from New York giving notice that the money had been blocked by U.S. authorities and held in New York City. The Committee can prove, through its contracts (see below), that the funds are designated exclusively for carefully negotiated summer games. A delegation from the same humanitarian youth organization in Nablus had recently taken part in a peace camp in the USA. Is the U.S. Government Battling Terrorism or Stealing Donations?

Helga Dieter, the coordinator of the project "Vacation from War," is now struggling for the return of the funds and seeks support from the American public.

Is the U.S. Government Battling Terrorism or Stealing Donations?

Helga Dieter is coordinator of the program "Vacation from War" of the Committee for Basic Rights and Democracy. Since 1994, nearly 20,000 children and young people from regions in crisis and war have been brought together with young people of the same age from their supposed "enemy" communities or states for two weeks of holidays, including 760 young people from Israel and Palestine. In addition, summer games have been financed for refugee children in Palestine.

In February, 2007, the United Nations published a report indicating that, as a result of the election of Hamas, a great part of the Palestinian population has starved. In order to make it possible for the children to eat well for at least two weeks, to take field trips, to amuse themselves with peaceful games, and to learn again to laugh, the Committee has financed the summer games and workshops.

The money for the peace program Vacation from War comes exclusively from private donations from single donors, complementing the donations from many peace groups, school classes, and church congregations throughout Germany which collect for this reconciliation and humanitarian project. A portion of the donations also comes from the USA where Katha Politt has, for many years, made appeals for support in her column in the magazine "The Nation."

For the last five years, the Future Generation Hands Association (previously known as the Nablus Youth Federation) has been a partner in the Vacation from War program, through which about 200 young people have been able to come to Germany in order, through a very difficult process, to become familiar with the perspectives of their contemporaries from Israel.

In June 2007, Future Generation Hands Association made an application for the support of the summer games. Helga Dieter assessed the proposal and approved a donation of \$8,000 to sponsor 200 children. Of that \$8,000, the largest share was to cover room and board costs.

A contract was signed on June 18, 2007, and was clear in stipulating:

“The goals of the project are recreation and creative activities, but also the pedagogical methods of non-violent education, reconciliation, and democracy (i.e., neither competition nor hierarchical education for leadership nor the honoring of “heroes” or “martyrs” are part of the program). Children of the organizers or of the local authorities may not participate. The proportion of girls and boys must be equal both in terms of numbers participating and activities offered. The Committee shall receive a copy of every single receipt.... When the project is also financed by any other organization, or when such funds cover other costs or are used for expansion of the project, the Committee must be informed. The Committee can authorize one person to insure the contractual execution of the Summer Games, to audit the bookkeeping, and so forth.

Following the bloody putsch by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, unrest has also been reported in Nablus. Helga Dieter feared that, in the context of the escalation, money could fall into the hands of Hamas and asked the partner organization for a secure banking connection, e.g., in Jerusalem. Such an account does not exist. On June 22, 2007, the Committee's bank transferred \$8,000 to the account in Nablus.

Four days later, the Committee received notice that the money had not been transferred, because Future Generation Hands Association appeared to be a legal entity falling under the sanctions of the U.S. Treasury Department for foreign assets control. Further information regarding the organization and the purpose of the transfer were demanded. Only then could it be determined whether the money should be confiscated or released. As of June 27, 2007, the money was held in a blocked account of the Deutsche Bank Trust Company. The letter closed with the message: “We are sorry for any inconvenience.”

After her initial irritation had receded, Helga Dieter thought: “So that's how it is when peoples are placed under the general suspicion of terrorism. A rural bank in Germany is controlled by the US Treasury Department. That's real globalization. The frozen money is safe in the Deutsche-Bank-Trust in New York. We'll get it back soon, and then the summer games can take place.”

A call to the local bank provided the next shock. A bank employee indicated that he assumed that the problem was not with a particular organization but rather that all Palestinian banks now fall under U.S. sanctions (like those against Cuba and North Korea). It is very difficult to receive funds once they had been blocked.

“But isn't the money held by Deutsche Bank?” asked Helga Dieter.

“But in New York, under American laws,” was the answer.

“But we've already sent money to our partner organizations in Palestine this year.”

“But in Euros which get through,” he answered. “All dollar payments are screened and go through the U.S.A. The Americans have pushed that through, and everyone follows. I didn't know that Palestine fell under the blockade. It will be very, very difficult for you to get the money back.”

“This would not have happened if I had sent the money in Euros?” asked Helga Dieter incredulously.

“Yes. If I had known that banks in Palestine fell under the sanctions, I could have warned you.”

On June 28th, in the evening news broadcast of the ARD (the German state television network), Helga Dieter learned of the new European Union decision to provide data on European air passengers to U.S.

authorities. The ARD's correspondent from Brussels noted that "Today Europe authorized the U.S.A, to control all data on international bank transfers. While this is intended, like the air-passenger data, to serve the war against terror, this is, for some of us, the real problem." This news means that in the future, not even Euro transfers can be made to Palestine without U.S. control.

Helga Dieter has now, through her bank, sent a letter to the U.S, authorities in which she shows, on the basis of the contract, that the money is to be used only for the summer games. She notes that in the autumn of 2006, members of the Future Generation Hands Association traveled to America and took part in the Fourth Palestinian-Jewish Family Peacemakers Camp and that funds for the work in Nablus had also been collected in America. The director of the organization has been described on the website of Just Vision as one of the "model Israeli and Palestinian Peace Builders."

When Helga Dieter informed him about the confiscation of the transferred funds, he wondered, "But only just one month ago, and via the same bank account, we received a larger sum of donations from the U.S.A."

Viewed as black humor, the confiscation of this money is a threefold historical joke:

- At first, Helga Dieter was afraid that, if transferred, the money could end up in the hands of Hamas. Instead, the money is in the hands of the U.S. government.
- She presented the Palestinian partner organization with a contract in which non-violent and peaceful pedagogical principles were strictly defined. And now this program should be blocked in the name of the "war on terror."
- On the same day when the money for the holiday games was confiscated, Israel authorized the release of 295,000,000 Euros in duties and taxes to the Palestinian authorities in Ramallah which had been withheld since the election of Hamas in January, 2006.

If these summer games for the children of Nablus do not take place due to the power and arbitrariness of U.S. policy, then perhaps an additional field will be prepared for the growth of terrorism. We do not wish this to happen and will fight to get our donors' funds back.

Helga Dieter

Contact: Helga Dieter, Flussgasse 8, 60489 Frankfurt, Ph. 0049-69-789 2525, Fax: 0049-69-78803666, ubihedi@t-online.de www.ferien-vom-krieg.de, www.vacation-from-war.com

P.S. The money was transferred three months later.

**Contract between
“Future Generation Hands Association”, Nablus
and the
Committee for Fundamental Rights and Democracy”, Koeln**

“Summer-games for 200 children from Nablus”

The summer-games are part of the project “Vacation from War”. The goals of the concept are recreation and creative activities but also educational methods of non violent activities, reconciliation and democracy. (This means: fights and competitions are not content of the program as well as education to hierarchies (“leadership”) and worship of “heroes” or “martyrs”).

The target-group are 200 children from 8-14 years coming from very poor families. The volunteer’s children or relatives as well as children of local authorities can not take part. Any single exception must be discussed with the donor.

The proportion between boys and girls should be equal as well as their participation.

The following proposal from “Future Generation Hands Association, Nablus” and the changes in the budget are part of the contract.

Future Generation Hands Association”, Nablus tells the “Committee” in time when and where the games take place.

The Comitee needs every single bill and receipt with numbers, glued on paper and written (or translated) in English. Future Generation Hands Association”, Nablus sends the book-keeping with all receipts to the Committee -latest 1th of Octobre.

The volunteers get a “pocket-money” of \$ 100 out of the general budget from Future Generation Hands Association”, Nablus.

Each child gets a photo as a souvenir.

Future Generation Hands Association”, Nablus sends a report and photographs to the Committee -latest 1th of Octobre. The report contains narratives concerning individual fates and special situations – no general statements!

If Future Generation Hands Association”, Nablus gets money for the project from another organisation or institution they are obliged to inform the Commitee about the sum and the donor, even if this money covers other costs and/or extends the project.

The Committee can authorize a person who proofs the realisation of the project as well as the book-keeping.

Nablus,

Frankfurt, 20.06.07

**Majed Tubaila
Future Generation Hands Association”**

**Helga Dieter
Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie**

Budget see below

<p>Responsible for the Project “Vacation from War“ Helga Dieter Flussgasse8 D 60489 Frankfurt Tel. #49-69-7892525, Fax #49-69-78803666, mob. #49 172 6932525 ubihedi@t-online.de www.vacation-from-war.com and www.ferien-vom-krieg.de and www.grundrechtekomitee.de</p>	<p>Committee for Fundamental Rights and Democracy e.V. D 50670 Köln</p>
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US Treasury Office for Foreign Assets Control
via Deutsche Bank Trust Company NYC
via Volksbank Odenwald
Frankfurter Straße 1
64720 Michelstadt

Koeln, Frankfurt, 27th of June 2007

Ref.No. 070625604573

Dear Sirs:

For fourteen years our Committee has organized summer games for poor children in refugee camps and joint holiday camps for youth in war zones and crisis areas such as Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Serbia as well as Israel and Palestine. In this time nearly

20 000 young people took part. The humanitarian campaign “Vacation from War” is financed by private donors –mainly from Germany and from the US. A well-known American magazine (The Nation) also asks for support. The participants are chosen by several partner-organisations in their respective countries. In a contract each organization must assure that their goals are for non-violence and peace education. For more information about the campaign “Vacation from War” please look at our websites (www.vacation-from-war.com and www.ferien-vom-krieg.de).

For the last five years one of our partner organisations has been “Future Generation Hands Association” (former Nablus-Youth- Federation, <http://nablusyouth.com>). It is registered as a Humanitarian Organisation by the Palestinian Authority (see attachment). Altogether they brought over to Germany about 200 young people – all of them interested in meeting young Israelis in a difficult but peaceful process. Many of them changed their points of view (see “188 pleas for an Israeli-Palestinian-Dialogue” www.vacation-from-war.com). All went home with a new perspective for peace.

Last year a delegation of “Future Generation Hands Association” took part in a conference in the US near San Francisco, the “Fourth Palestinian-Jewish Family Peacemakers Camp” (<http://traubman.igc.org/camp2006.htm>). They ask for tax deductible contributions in order to support “Future Generation Hands Association” (<http://traubman.igc.org/light2006.htm>)

The director of “Future Generation Hands Association”, Mr. Majed Tubaila, is portrayed by Just Vision as one of the Israeli and Palestinian peace builders (www.justvision.org/).

Please transfer our money (USD 8,000) for the holiday games to “Future Generation Hands Association” or send it back. As an authenticate message we are including our contract with “Future Generation Hands Association” which was signed by both sides before we sent the money (see attachment).

Best wishes,
Helga Dieter

In spite of the described difficulties the summer-games took place in Nablus

Future Generation Hands Association”

Report Majed,

Supported By
“Basic Rights and Democracy Committee”



جمعية أيدي جيل المستقبل

It was necessary to establish a Smile and Joy Camp which bears the children s' talents and hopes; those children will remain the hope for a better future. All words fail to describe the talents and the ideas of children, it fails to explain how much this distressed youth suffers, which doesn't know anything except the voice of bullets.

After the summer-games with psychologists and supervisors, it has been essential to exhibit the children's' products in a big festival. The children song for a brighter future, full of love and peace. This camp which asserted the non-violent culture and the activities for children welfare and education.

The festival was attended by the parents of the children, who expressed their happiness and joy of what their children have achieved, they asserted that they are happy of what they saw in the exhibition, the festival was also attended by journalists ,and it was broadcast through the local channels directly.

At the end we thank all who contribute and support our programs and we say, "hand by hand" to draw the smile on the faces of children".

Note:

In Future Generation Hands Association, after the camp we were studying all reports related to the children of the camp, and because of the difficulty of their situation we decided to work with 60-80 children, divide them into four groups, and work with them for 6 months .We hope that you could support this program.



Mr. Majed, the director of Future Generation Hands Association, told us in an interview that he was a fighter and in 2002 took part in the struggle to defend the Old City of Nablus against the Israeli army. He went through horrible days. Afterwards he said in an interview: „Nowadays resistance is to me to provide children with a glass of milk each day. Resistance is if a child has fun. These are my strategic options. ‘Higher’ goals I don’t have anymore!”

