

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 28, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to request an inquiry, explanation, and remedial action regarding two U.S. State Department grants made to an entity in Gaza that supports terrorism and cooperates with known terrorist leaders.

According to a new report released by [NGO Monitor](#), an Israeli NGO, and covered by the [Washington Examiner](#), the State Department has awarded money to the Phoenix Center for Research and Field Studies.

NGO Monitor's report carefully cites the grants through the U.S. government website [usaspending.gov](https://usaspending.gov), including the granting agency, federal award identification number, and name and address of the grantee.

The report documents that the Phoenix Center regularly hosts symposia, workshops, and discussions with senior leaders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)—both of which the U.S. Government has designated as [Foreign Terrorist Organizations](#). At these events, flags of these terrorist organizations are prominently displayed, and support is expressed for them and for “armed resistance” – a euphemism for terrorism.

For example, on May 29, 2022, the Phoenix Center hosted a discussion at which “participants emphasized the need to redefine the armed resistance and define its tasks in a framework of total conflict with the occupation...” On September 19, 2022, the Phoenix Center held a discussion with senior PIJ member Khader Habib, in which participants emphasized the requirement of “continued resistance action until achieving a third intifada.”

On November 9, 2022, the Phoenix Center held a discussion where its director of programs, Salah Abdalati, praised newly-founded West Bank terror cells, describing “The joy created by the phenomena of the Lions’ Den, the [PIJ’s] Jenin battalion and the Nablus

Battalion.” And on December 13, 2022, the Phoenix Center hosted a discussion that concluded “the priorities of future agendas must include the need to reintegrate armed resistance and popular resistance... viewing both as essential tools of the conflict.”

The above quotes and more like them are readily accessible on the Phoenix Center’s website. This raises concerns about the process by which the Phoenix Center was selected, vetted, and approved as a State Department grantee. Nor would it be relevant that one of the grants refers to a project for the development of IT skills and networking opportunities and the other to a project to enhance knowledge and skills in public speaking since due to the fungibility of money, funding for one activity of an entity facilitates that entity’s other activities.

Under absolutely no circumstances should the State Department be subsidizing an organization that promotes the killing of innocent Jews and terror attacks against our great ally Israel.

We respectfully request that you look into this matter and, if the matter proves to be as stated by NGO Monitor, we request further to be informed how the selection of Phoenix Center happened, what remedial action the Department will take in regard to these grants, and what action the Department will take in order to ensure that this does not happen again. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress

  
GUS M. BILIRAKIS  
Member of Congress