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Spot Report¹: Muthanna al-Hanooti and Life for Relief and Development

On March 26, 2008, federal prosecutors in Michigan unsealed an indictment against Muthanna al-Hanooti, the long-time public relations coordinator for Life for Relief and Development (LRD),² a charitable organization based in Southfield, Michigan. The Department of Justice alleges that in the late 1990s, **the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) "targeted LRD and...al-Hanooti to cooperate with and serve the IIS."** Further, "between in or about 1999 and 2002...al-Hanooti provided to the IIS a list of members of the United States Congress whom al-Hanooti believed favored lifting of the Iraqi Sanctions Regulations."³

In that same time frame, "al-Hanooti provided to the IIS a written strategy on how to obtain the lifting of the Iraqi Sanctions Regulations" and "met again in Iraq with the IIS, which again requested that defendant al-Hanooti coordinate a delegation to Iraq to include members of the United States Congress."

Then, "in or about September 2002, defendant al-Hanooti helped to organize a delegation to Iraq, which included three members of the United States Congress..."⁴ Open sources note that Democratic Representatives Jim McDermott of Washington, David Bonior of Michigan, and Mike Thompson of California traveled to Iraq at that time, though they reportedly were unaware of al-Hanooti's IIS ties.⁵ An IIS officer then "directed an intermediary" to pay "LRD \$24,000...for the...travel expenses." For his services, Iraq allocated al-Hanooti two million barrels of oil.⁶

The below photographs⁷ reflect the remarkable access that LRD was able to secure to government officials, both in the U.S. and abroad.



Muthanna Alhanooti of LIFE with Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm



Muthanna Alhanooti of LIFE with members of the U.S. State Department Global Transitions

¹ NEFA's "Spot Reports" respond to breaking news and provide a brief overview of a specific topic; they are not intended to serve as comprehensive reports.

² According to the Department of Justice, al-Hanooti served in that role from 1994 through 1999, 2001 through 2002, and 2005 through mid-2006. See: U.S. v. Al-Hanooti, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:08-cr-20083, Indictment, Filed February 13, 2008.

³ U.S. v. Al-Hanooti, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:08-cr-20083, Indictment, Filed February 13, 2008.

⁴ U.S. v. Al-Hanooti, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:08-cr-20083, Indictment, Filed February 13, 2008.

⁵ "Indictment: Hussein Fed Money to Spy for U.S. Officials' Trip," *CNN*, March 26, 2008.

⁶ U.S. v. Al-Hanooti, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:08-cr-20083, Indictment, Filed February 13, 2008.

⁷ All photographs and captions are drawn from LRD newsletters.



Muthanna Alhanooti of LIFE with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad



Muthanna Al-Hanooti (right) with the British MP Clare Short (left)



Federal and State senior law enforcement representatives attend a presentation at the LIFE offices in Southfield, MI



LIFE's CEO, Dr. Ghanim Al-Jumaily with the Attorney General Of The State Of Michigan.

Note: LRD has mislabeled the picture on the right; the individual to the right of Dr. Ghanim al-Jumaily is Jeffrey Collins, then-U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan.⁸



Dr. Khalil Jassem & Chip Poncy, Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary Stuart A. Levey

Note: Khalil Jassem served as LRD's President; Stuart Levey is the Treasury Department's Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.⁹

⁸ For a picture of Collins, see: <http://www.cnn.com/2004/LAW/01/15/hezbollah.charges.ap/>.

⁹ Stuart Levey Biography, U.S. Department of the Treasury.



Brian Moskowitz, Imad Hamad, Chip Poncy, Mohammed Alomari, Dr. Khalil Jassem, and Kay Siblani (right to left)

Note: Brian Moskowitz served as Special Agent in Charge of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Detroit office.¹⁰ Mohammed Alomari has acted as an LRD spokesman.¹¹



Meeting at the US Embassy in Damascus, from left Imad Hamad, ADC Regional Director, Ambassador Kattof and Ghanim Al-Jumaily.



Congressman John Conyers and members of his staff visit the LIFE office in Southfield, MI

Note: In the photo on the left, LRD's Ghanim al-Jumaily is pictured beside Theodore Kattof, US Ambassador to Syria.

¹⁰ "Brian Moskowitz Named Detroit ICE Special Agent in Charge," *ICE Press Release*, January 28, 2004.

¹¹ Paul Egan and Gregg Krupa, "Raid Turns up Cash in Home," *The Detroit News*, September 22, 2006.



Fundraising event at Washington DC- From left, Congressman John Conyers from Michigan, Mahdi Bray from MAS Freedom Foundation, Former Ambassador to Iraq - Edward Peck, President of Life: Dr. Khalil Jassemm, and Executive Director of EPIC: Erik Gustafson



Former Ambassador to Iraq, Edward Peck, gives a speech at a LIFE Fundraising Event in Washington D.C.

Note: The caption on the left reads, "Fundraising event at Washington DC – From left, Congressman John Conyers from Michigan, Mahdi Bray from MAS Freedom Foundation, Former Ambassador to Iraq – Edward Peck, President of Life, Dr. Khalil Jassemm, and Executive Director of EPIC, Eric Gustafson."

Additional Information on LRD

LRD has not been charged with any crimes and continues to operate. However, the FBI raided LRD's Michigan office in September 2006;¹² Muthanna al-Hanooti's office was also searched, as were the homes of Khalil Jassemm,¹³ Shakir Abdul-Kaf Hamoodi,¹⁴ and Mujahid al-Fayadh.¹⁵ (Searches of al-Fayadh's home turned up over \$133,000 in cash and Iraqi military decorations.¹⁶)

According to government court filings, agents from the Joint Terrorism Task Force were hunting for, among other items, any "documents and records related to the Iraqi Islamic Party, the Iraqi Accord Front, the Al-Tawafuq Front, the Islamic Relief Agency, the Islamic African Relief Agency or Human Appeal International."¹⁷

The U.S. Treasury Department named the Islamic Relief Agency/Islamic African Relief Agency a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in October 2004 for financially

¹² In the Matter of the Search of 17300 West Ten Mile Road, Southfield, Michigan 48075, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:06-x-50861-NGE, Filed September 20, 2006.

¹³ Niraj Warikoo, "Raid on Metro Charity Troubles Area Muslims," *Detroit Free Press*, September 19, 2006.

¹⁴ Alan Scher Zagier, "FBI Raids Home of Missouri Islamic Leader and War Critic," *Associated Press*, September 19, 2006.

¹⁵ In the Matter of the Search of 5080 Abingdon Circle, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48108, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:06-x-50861-NGE, Filed September 20, 2006.

¹⁶ In the Matter of the Search of 5080 Abingdon Circle, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48108, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:06-x-50861-NGE, Filed September 20, 2006 and "Targets of Raid Resign from Muslim Hidayah Group," *Ann Arbor News*, September 26, 2006.

¹⁷ In the Matter of the Search of 17300 West Ten Mile Road, Southfield, Michigan 48075, (E.D. MI.), No. 2:06-x-50861-NGE, Filed September 20, 2006.

supporting Usama Bin Laden, Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Hamas, and Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya.¹⁸ And a declassified FBI report establishes that there was "a close relationship" between Human Appeal International, Hamas, and the Holy Land Foundation,¹⁹ which has also been labeled a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.²⁰ *The Detroit Free Press* reported that the month before the raids, al-Hanooti "left Life for Relief and Development to consider being the U.S. representative of the Iraqi Islamic Party."²¹

In June 2004, U.S. troops in Iraq raided LRD's Baghdad office confiscating "12 computers and 20 boxes of files" following "a cordon and search operation," according to a coalition spokesman.²²

It is worth noting that after 9/11, LRD has collaborated with at least two organizations that have since been named Specially Designated Global Terrorists by the U.S. government.

- In its Summer 2003 newsletter, LRD reported that, working in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, "KindHearts and LIFE-USA tried to reach out to victims in an effort to reduce their suffering and to bring back a smile to the faces of orphans, widows, and deprived families. Both organizations distributed food packages to needy families to provide them with sustenance for the month."²³ In February 2006, the Treasury Department shut down KindHearts, a Toledo, Ohio-based charity, for funneling money to Hamas. Treasury stated, "KindHearts reportedly provides support to Hamas in the West Bank. An individual identified as integral to assisting KindHearts deliver aid to Palestinians in the West Bank, also reportedly was responsible for dividing money raised by KindHearts in the U.S to ensure that some funds went to Hamas."²⁴
- The Summer 2003 newsletter added that "LIFE's staff members, along with the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA), took over the management of the IRC Hospital in Baghdad..."²⁵ As noted above, the U.S. Treasury Department named ISRA (a.k.a. Islamic African Relief Agency) a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in October 2004 for financially supporting Usama Bin Laden, Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Hamas, and Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya.²⁶

¹⁸ "Treasury Designates Global Network, Senior Officials of IARA for Supporting bin Laden, Others," *Treasury Department Press Release*, October 13, 2004.

¹⁹ Action Memorandum from Dale L. Watson, Assistant Director, Counterterrorism Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation to R. Richard Newcomb, Director, Office of Foreign Asset Control, Treasury Department, November 5, 2001.

²⁰ "Statement of Secretary Paul O'Neill on the Blocking of Hamas Financiers' Assets," *Treasury Department Press Release*, December 4, 2001.

²¹ Niraj Warikoo, "Raid on Metro Charity Troubles Area Muslims," *Detroit Free Press*, September 19, 2006.

²² Robert Collier, "Michigan-Based Charity Finds Itself Caught in the Middle," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 17, 2004.

²³ LIFELink Newsletter, Summer 2003.

²⁴ "Treasury Freezes Assets of Organization Tied to Hamas," *Treasury Department Press Release*, February 19, 2006.

²⁵ LIFELink Newsletter, Summer 2003.

²⁶ "Treasury Designates Global Network, Senior Officials of IARA for Supporting bin Laden, Others," *Treasury Department Press Release*, October 13, 2004.

Appendix 1

"And if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind" Quran

Iraq

Sierra Leone

Chechnya

Afghanistan

Recognition

So often we hear about the disasters in the third world countries, but in reality, seeing the situation is far worse than hearing. Life's personnel are doing their best to bring the reality of the devastation in many countries to the attention of the politicians in the World in order to gain their support and recognition. The following key politicians from the United States have responded to these efforts and expressed their gratitude toward Life's achievements:

[Carl Levin](#)

(United States Senate)

[David E. Bonior](#)

(Member of Congress)

[John D. Dingell](#)

(Member of Congress)

[Carolyn C. Kilpatrick](#)

(Member of Congress)

[Lynn N. Rivers](#)

(Member of Congress)

[Spencer Abraham](#)

(United States Senate)

[John Conyers, Jr.](#)

(Member of Congress)

[John Engler](#)

(Governor)

[Joe Knollenberg](#)

(Member of Congress)

[Barbara Lee](#)

(Member of Congress)

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Updated on Feb 12, 2002

[Webmaster](#)

Appendix 2

JOHN CONYERS, JR.
15th District, Michigan

MEMBER
RANKING MEMBER
JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COURTS AND
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE
CONSTITUTION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2201

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2428 FAYETTE SQUARE DRIVE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2221
PHONE: 202-275-1178

DETROIT OFFICE
607 FORDHAM BUILDING
231 W. LAWAYETTE
DETROIT, MI 48226
PHONE: 313-961-5670

February 26, 1999

Life for Relief & Development
(formerly International Relief Association)
17300 W. 10 Mile Road
Southfield, Michigan 48075-8325

Dear Friends:

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your dedication to helping the needy and rebuilding their lives in Iraq and Sierra Leone over these past six years. Moreover, I am very pleased to know that you have pursued and obtained a Department of Treasury license authorizing the export of humanitarian aid supplies to those so desperately in need of them in the Middle East.

As you know, as Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, I have openly declared my opposition to continued economic sanctions against the people of Iraq. The senseless suffering of the more than 1.5 million people there over the past eight years is unconscionable. Hence, any effort to ease their pain is met with my adamant support.

Much continued success in your efforts and rest assured that my office will always be available to you.

Sincerely,

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515
February 10, 1999

DAVID E. BONIOR
10th District, Michigan

MINORITY WHIP

Mr. Muthanna Al-Hanooti
Public Relations & Media
LIFE for Relief & Development
17300 W. 10 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48075-9429

Dear Mr. Al-Hanooti:

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank and commend you and all the members of your organization for your tireless efforts on behalf of the women, children, and all other innocent civilian victims of war in Iraq and Sierra Leone.

LIFE has labored patiently and with humility but at the same time has fought with a great determination born of moral conviction to overcome formidable obstacles in order to secure a measure of justice and relief for the millions in these war-ravaged lands who have been reduced to poverty, hunger, misery, and disease. In this mission, let us all be inspired and guided by Surat 2 and 4 of the Holy Quran, which instruct us to be charitable toward those in need.

Please accept my best wishes for the success of your organization during this new year, and, as always, let me know if I can help in any way in its works of mercy.

Sincerely,

David E. Bonior
Member of Congress

CARL LEVIN
MICHIGAN

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2202

February 9, 1999

Yarub Al-Shiraida, Ph.D.
LIFE for Relief and Development
17300 W. 10 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48075-9429

Dear Dr. Al-Shiraida:

I was delighted to hear that LIFE had recently received its license for additional shipments of humanitarian aid to Iraq. I share your deep concern for the innocent people of Iraq and commend your tireless efforts on their behalf.

Thank you for requesting my assistance in working with the Departments of State and Treasury. It is a complicated process and I am pleased that my staff was able to help facilitate your meetings in Washington.

I would also like to commend your broader work in the Arab and Muslim American community. You are fortunate to have the commitment and dedication of folks like Ms. Vicki Robb which, I am sure, accounts for your many successes. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Carl Levin

CL/jj

SPENCER ABRAHAM
MICHIGAN

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2703

February 18, 1999

Mr. Muthanna Al-Hanooti
Public Relations and Media Director
Life For Relief and Development
17300 West 10 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48075

Dear Muthanna:

I am pleased to send my sincere best wishes to Life For Relief and Development (LIFE) as you celebrate your most successful sixth year. LIFE is a very capable and dedicated organization, and I am proud to have such an organization based in Michigan.

I commend you for your wonderful work and dedication in delivering humanitarian aid to Iraq, West Africa and around the United States - a noble goal which I strongly support. I was especially pleased to work with LIFE when it acquired a recent U.S. Treasury Department License to ship humanitarian goods to Iraq. Congratulations on acquiring another one, and much success for your projects in 1999.

All of you involved in LIFE should be praised for your commitment to Arab-American and Muslim-American understanding and tolerance. These efforts will go far in enhancing and promoting our community's image and understanding in America and throughout the world.

Please accept my sincere best wishes for many future and successful endeavors.

Sincerely,

Spencer Abraham
United States Senate