Compliance Visits & Inspections,
Investigations Monitoring and Enforcement Directorate
Charity Commission

Email to: CVI@charitycommission.gov.uk

10 September 2023

Dear Sir or Madam

Solutions Not Sides - Charity number 1183651

I am writing on behalf of UK Lawyers for Israel, which is a voluntary association of lawyers who support Israel and seek the proper application of the law in matters relating to Israel. Our patrons and members include some of the most distinguished members of the legal profession in the United Kingdom.

We are very concerned about some issues relating to the educational charity, Solutions Not Sides (SNS):

1) SNS invites individuals from a Palestinian organisation called Zimam Palestine ("Zimam") to speak to children in UK schools, on the basis that Zimam is an organisation supporting peace. Zimam is a Palestinian NGO which trains young Palestinians to be ambassadors, advocates and future leaders. It is promoted as an alternative to extremism, "inspired and driven by values of democracy, pluralism, non-violence, and responsibility." However, we have investigated Zimam and found that its central officers support and/or condone support for terrorism. We have also shown that Zimam instructors who teach the "ambassadors" who are sent to speak to UK schoolchildren, are themselves supporters of terrorism.

2) Furthermore, SNS encourages the children that it teaches in UK schools to take part in political activities, and points them towards contacting a list of organisations which include Zimam, and another NGO, Al Haq, which is designated as a terror organisation in Israel.

SNS runs workshops in UK schools to teach about the Israel/Palestine dispute over three one hour sessions. The workshops are aimed at children aged 13 to 18. The highlight of the course is when a pair of Israeli and Palestinian speakers is brought into the classroom for a discussion of their personal experiences. SNS's August 2022 accounts reveal that in the year to August 2022 they ran 174 teaching sessions which reached 8,651 students.

We have been informed that around 20% of the Palestinian speakers used by SNS in British schools are from Zimam, which was previously a sister organisation of SNS. Both had been part of a charity called OneVoice Europe. SNS became an independent charity in May 2019.

We believe that SNS, as a charity, is liable to be brought into disrepute by its association with Zimam.

As part of the SNS course, the children are encouraged to contact a list of organisations which SNS says "*show that people can work together to find a solution to conflict*". Zimam is one of the organisations on the SNS list.

Another is Al Haq, which was designated by Israel as a terrorist organisation on 19 October 2021[1], and described as an arm of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terror organisation.[2]

We first informed SNS of the above information on 18 June 2023, as part of a report we had prepared on their teaching resources. Despite several months of correspondence, SNS failed to assure us that they would stop working with Zimam.

On 24 August 2023 we sent SNS a more detailed report on Zimam, showing even more evidence of its support and condoning of terrorism and violence. However, we have still not received any assurance that SNS will terminate its relationship with Zimam.

We had sent the expanded report to Zimam itself on 11 August 2023, asking them to correct any inaccuracies, but we received no response. However, some of the Facebook posts that we had highlighted in our report appear to have been removed or made inaccessible to us.

We note that paragraph 6.2 of the Charity Commission's publication entitled "***Protecting Charities from Abuse for Extremist Purposes***" warns:

"*Trustees should be aware that abuse can occur in ways which aren't always immediately obvious or apparent. It is therefore important that trustees maintain good lines of communication, accountability and oversight where they are not directly in charge of all aspects of the management and administration of a charity. Some examples include:*[3]

- *a charity works with, or funds, a partner that promotes or fails to condemn extremist views or terrorist activity (whether or not it may be a charity) and so brings the charity into disrepute*
- *people with extremist views use legitimate and acceptable contact with the charity to endorse these views, or to give them status or credibility*
- *the charity organises activities that support views which could be considered harmful or unlawful*

[1] https://nbctf.mod.gov.il/he/Announcements/Documents/Designation%20No.%20373-%20Al-Haq_22.10.21.pdf
[2] https://nbctf.mod.gov.il/en/Pages/211021EN.aspx
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-charities-from-abuse-for-extremist-purposes/chapter-5-protecting-charities-from-abuse-for-extremist-purposes#how-might-extremists-abuse-charities

- *a charity invites speakers, or uses volunteers, who the trustees know are likely to promote extremist ideology to influence or direct the charity's work*
- *a charity uses or distributes literature which contains extremist views and makes this available to the charity's beneficiaries*

We believe that SNS is working with a partner (namely Zimam) which promotes or fails to condemn extremist views and terrorist activity, and is bringing SNS into disrepute.

We also believe that people with extremist views (ie those who condone or fail to condemn terrorism) at Zimam are using contact with SNS to give themselves status or credibility. This has resulted in Zimam being introduced to UK Ministers as a legitimate peace organisation in the West Bank.[4]

When SNS encourages children to contact Zimam and El Haq, as part of their political activism, it is organising activities that support views which could be considered harmful or unlawful.

SNS is also making available extremist views to the charities' beneficiaries when it encourages the children to contact the organisations Zimam and Al Haq.

SNS is also inviting speakers who it knows are likely to promote extremist ideology to influence or direct the charity's work. It has known about this since 18 June 2023 when we first sent them the report about these matters.

We attach the expanded report on Zimam.

We would be grateful if you would look into these issues, and engage with SNS to ensure that it terminates its connections with Zimam and Al Haq.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



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[4] https://web.archive.org/web/20170627210423/http:/www.allmep.org/one-year-on-zimam-is-driving-the-discourse-across-palestine/