

Press Release

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Mail and MailOnline apologise and pay £120,000 in damages to Interpal Trustees over false terror and extremism allegations

Associated Newspapers, the publisher of the Daily Mail and MailOnline, has published full apologies and paid £120,000 in libel damages to the Trustees of Interpal, a UK-based registered charity which provides relief and development aid to Palestinians in need. Associated Newspapers will also be paying the Trustees' legal costs.

The Trustees' complaint related to articles published on 2 and 15 August 2018, which falsely alleged that Interpal had supported a "hate festival" in Gaza in which children acted out the murder of Jewish people. In fact, however – and as the Mail and MailOnline have now fully accepted – while Interpal (among many others) had donated to the festival, it certainly did not fund or support the play (which formed a tiny part of a very large event) and had no prior knowledge of it. On the contrary; as soon as they became aware of the play, the Trustees unequivocally condemned both the play and the appalling activities it depicted.

To make matters worse, the 15 August article referred to Interpal having been listed in the United States as a "specially designated global terrorist organisation", thus leaving readers with the clear impression that Interpal is a terrorist organisation and that its Trustees are thereby to be considered terrorists. What the article completely failed to make clear, however – and as MailOnline has now acknowledged in its unreserved apology - is the fact that the US designation (which was made some sixteen years ago in 2003) has always been strongly contested by Interpal and the Trustees (who, along with the Charity Commission, have never been provided with any of the evidence purportedly relied on by the US authorities); that Interpal and its Trustees strongly reject any suggestion that they in any way support or are involved with terrorism; and that Interpal continues to operate entirely lawfully under the aegis and supervision of the Charity Commission. Indeed, the Commission has investigated Interpal on a number of occasions, including following the US designation, and found no reason to alter its charitable status.

In apologising unreservedly to the Trustees, MailOnline accepted that *"neither Interpal, nor its Trustees, have ever been involved in or provided support for terrorist activity of any kind."*

Two full apologies have been published on MailOnline,¹ on the MailOnline App, and prominently in the print edition of the Daily Mail.

Speaking after the resolution of the libel complaint, Ibrahim Hewitt, the Chairman of the Trustees, said:

“Interpal and the Trustees welcome the decision taken by Associated Newspapers both to apologise formally and pay a suitable sum in damages, in recognition of the gravity of the falsehoods that were published. The timing and amount of the settlement are particularly noteworthy within the context of the ongoing wider agenda to politicise humanitarian aid to Palestinians. We hope that this significant success will encourage commentators and others to take seriously their responsibility for reporting unbiased, accurate information to the general public and service providers.”

Note to editors: Founded in 1994, Interpal is registered in the United Kingdom with the Charity Commission (number 1040094). It is a non-political, non-profit organisation that works with international funding partners and partners on the ground to provide relief and development aid to Palestinians in need; it assists in the provision of essential humanitarian relief, education, health and medical services and community development.

For further information, please contact Adam Tudor (adam.tudor@carter-ruck.com)

¹<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/article-7029837/Corrections-clarifications.html>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/article-6965301/Clarifications-corrections.html>