

Mohammad El Halabi, World Vision manager, charged with diverting funds to Hamas by [Michele Chabin](#) in the [August 31, 2016](#) issue

Israeli security officials have charged Mohammad El Halabi, the operations manager in Gaza for World Vision, with funneling tens of millions of dollars in donations to Hamas's military wing.

According to the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, the Shin Bet contends that 60 percent of World Vision's Gaza operations were diverted to Hamas. World Vision, one of the world's largest Christian humanitarian aid organizations, said in a statement August 4 that it was "shocked" by the allegations and that "based on the information available to us at this time, we have no reason to believe that the allegations are true."

The Shin Bet, Israel's domestic security service, said in a statement that during interrogations over the past six weeks Halabi admitted to being a Hamas activist and using his position "to divert the humanitarian organization's funds and resources from the needy" to benefit Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip. The money went toward weapons, tunnels into Israel, a military base, and militants' salaries, according to the security agency.

World Vision, whose worldwide budget is close to \$3 billion, said the Gaza programs "have been subject to regular internal and independent audits, independent evaluations, and a broad range of internal controls aimed at ensuring that assets reach their intended beneficiaries and are used in compliance with applicable laws and donor requirements."

World Vision, which has provided assistance to Palestinian children for four decades, said it will "carefully review any evidence presented to us and will take appropriate actions based on that evidence. We continue to call for a fair legal process."

Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, president of Shurat HaDin, an Israeli legal rights institute that provides representation and resources for victims of terrorist attacks, said the charges against Halabi should come as no surprise to World Vision's leadership.

“For years we have been warning that World Vision is funding Palestinian terror groups in Gaza,” she said. “World Vision has repeatedly denied our charges and refused to seriously investigate where its funds are going.” —Religion News Service