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Press release

Regulator investigates fundraising activity over links to pro-Hamas media outlet

The Charity Commission has launched a statutory inquiry following concerns over how charitable funds have been used by a now sanctioned individual.

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The Charity Commission has confirmed it has launched a statutory inquiry to investigate funds

raised for charitable purposes by and on behalf of Aozma Sultana.

Aozma Sultana was sanctioned by the UK Government following suspected involvement in providing financial support for Gaza Now, a news agency that promotes Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. This means she is now subject to a full asset freeze and her name appears on the 'UK Sanctions List' as a designated person. As a result, Ms Sultana is now automatically disqualified from being a trustee or holding a senior management position in a charity.

The regulator's investigations team launched an inquiry after becoming aware that two companies, of which Ms Sultana is sole director, appear to have partnered with Gaza Now to raise funds to provide humanitarian support for those in need in Gaza. The investigations team is also aware of information published by the U.S. Department of the Treasury which has stated that the two companies have given thousands of dollars to Gaza Now. The US Treasury states that the same companies advertised Gaza Now as a partner during a joint fundraiser, which started shortly after Hamas' October 7 terrorist attack on Israel.

The regulator has serious concerns that the funds raised may not have been used for their intended purposes and may have been misappropriated. The appeal sought donations from the public for emergency medication, food and shelter to help those in need but is suspected of funding Gaza Now.

Individuals and organisations raising funds for a particular charitable purpose have a legal responsibility for ensuring they are used for the purposes intended by the donors.

The regulator seeks to determine what activities undertaken by Ms Sultana and/or the UK registered companies (Aakhirah Limited and Al-Qureshi Executives) fall within the Commission's jurisdiction. It is also investigating how charitable funds have been raised and used to ascertain if these funds can be fully accounted for.

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional regulatory issues emerge.

It is the Commission's usual policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing the issues examined, any action taken, and the inquiry's outcomes.

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Notes to editors

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1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its ambition is to be an expert regulator that is fair, balanced, and independent so that charity can thrive. This ambition will help to create and sustain an environment where charities further build public trust and ultimately fulfil their essential role in enhancing lives and strengthening society.
2. On 28th March 2024, the Charity Commission opened a statutory inquiry into funds raised for charitable purposes by or on behalf of Aozma Sultana, under section 46 of the Charities Act 2011.
3. In accordance with section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 and due to her designation, Ms Sultana is automatically disqualified from serving as a trustee for any charity, whether registered with the Commission or not. This disqualification extends to holding senior management positions within a charity.
4. On 27th March 2024, the UK Government [announced new sanctions on persons linked to Hamas-supporting media network](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-sanctions-on-hamas-supporting-media-network) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-sanctions-on->

[persons-linked-to-hamas-supporting-media-network](#)), which included Ms Sultana.

5. The Commission encourages members of the public to donate to fundraising appeals by registered charities. In response to the Israel-Gaza conflict, the regulator produced advice last year which included tips to help people ensure their donations reached those in need. More information and advice can be found via this link: [Charity Commission advice on how to help civilians impacted by the Israel-Gaza conflict - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-advice-on-how-to-help-civilians-impacted-by-the-israel-gaza-conflict>)

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