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World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout
Всемирная Организация Скаутского Движения
Organización Mundial del Movimiento Scout
المنظمة العالمية للحركة الكشفية

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Mr Hasan Dinçer SUBAŞI

Chief Scout & International Commissioner
Scouting and Guiding Federation of Turkey

By email:
baskan@tif.org.tr

Oper/TURKEY

Geneva, 2nd June 2010

Re: Declaration of the Board of Directors of The Scouting and Guiding Federation of Turkey

Dear Friend in Scouting, Dear Hasan,

We have received the "Declaration of the Board of Directors of the Scouting and Guiding Federation of Turkey" that you have sent to us via the WorldInfo e-mail address.

Whatever may be our personal views on the issue raised in your Declaration, we regret very much that the Scouting and Guiding Federation of Turkey has issued this document. We regret even more that the Declaration announces that your Federation is "*cutting off all its communications with Israeli scouts and do not want to make any activity with them*".

I remind you, in your capacity as a National Scout Organization which is a Member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, of the following Articles of the WOSM Constitution, which govern your Federation's membership of WOSM (*emphasis added*):

Article I, 1 (Definition) : The Scout Movement is a voluntary, *non-political* educational movement for young people open to all without distinction of gender, origin, race or creed, in accordance with the purpose, principles and method conceived by the Founder and stated below.

Article 1, 2 (Purpose) : The *purpose* of the Scout Movement is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

Article V, 3, (Requirements for Membership of WOSM) : Membership of a National Scout Organization in the World Organization requires... (d) maintenance of the Organization as an independent, *non-political*, voluntary movement of probity and effectiveness.

Your Federation's Declaration can not be viewed as anything other than a direct intervention into the political domain. That is not in keeping with the conditions of membership of WOSM. That your Declaration goes so far as to implicate Scouts in another country, who are not responsible for the political act that you criticize, is particularly troubling.

As stated at the beginning of this message, we are each entitled to our personal views and I have no doubt that there are many in the world today who share yours on this particular issue. And no doubt many Scouts around the world - acting "as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities" - are also deeply concerned by the events of the past days. But that is something quite separate from issuing a formal Declaration such as the one your Federation has issued. Without entering at all into the substance of the matter, your Federation's action risks putting its own membership of WOSM at stake.

The Scout Movement must rise above any political issue, or it would quickly find itself embroiled in so many that it would quickly lose its unique identity and become nothing more than a tool of those who would like to use it for their own purposes. This is a message that we send consistently to all those who appeal for us to take sides in political issues. In that sense, the Scout Movement is very similar to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, remaining absolutely neutral in such matters.

The *purpose* of the Scout Movement, quoted above, is very clear. We tackle issues such as the dispute your Declaration refers to through the education of young people - notably through education for peace, inter-cultural dialogue and understanding.

We must remain, even in times of dire strife that can tear countries apart, united in the brotherhood of Scouting, which is why your Declaration concerning relationships with Israeli Scouts - who are not part of the problem your Declaration is trying to deal with - is to be deeply regretted.

We appeal to you to reconsider your position and inform all those to whom you have sent your Declaration that you have withdrawn it. In particular, we appeal to you not to take any further action which could lead to calls for the Scouting and Guiding Federation of Turkey to be suspended from WOSM membership.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding.



Luc Panissod
Secretary General WOSM

cc:
World Scout Committee
European Scout Committee
Regional Director, European Region
Director WAGGGS, World Bureau