

Blair Family Impending Corruption Scandal? Tony Blair Faces Pressure Over Role as Middle East Envoy

Qatar telecoms company helped by ex-PM became donor to Cherie Blair's foundation

By [Global Research News](#)

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Tony Blair's position as Middle East envoy is under renewed pressure because of financial links between a telecommunications company and his wife's foundation.

Exaro can reveal that the Qatari-backed company, Ooredoo, which benefitted from Blair's lobbying as representative of the Quartet for a mobile-telephone network for the Palestinian market, is a donor to the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. Ooredoo has also had "partnerships" with Cherie Blair's foundation in Indonesia and Burma.

The foundation, a registered charity, confirmed that Ooredoo was a donor, but refused to say how much it had paid. In a statement to Exaro, it said: "Ooredoo made a donation to the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women during the 2012-13 financial year."

"It is not our practice to disclose the size of donations from our supporters."

It added: "We are extremely grateful to Ooredoo for its support of our work and its commitment to empowering women entrepreneurs."

Last month, Exaro revealed [a letter from Tony Blair that showed how he had prioritised the Palestinian contract as part of his role as Middle East envoy for the Quartet, which is made up of America, Russia, the United Nations and the European Union.](#)

Ooredoo, then known as Qtel, sought the contract for a mobile-telephone network for the Palestinian market. The company was a long-standing client of JP Morgan, the bank where Blair is an advisor reportedly on £2 million a year.

But the former British prime minister says that he did not know about JP Morgan's link to the Palestinian contract.

[The declassified letter of 2009 - published in full by Exaro - was obtained for a new book, 'Blair Inc', and shows how the Middle East envoy regarded the project as one of the two most important "key issues" in trying to forge a two-state solution for the Palestinians and Israelis.](#)

He lobbied Israel to allocate the bandwidth for the network, although his spokesman said that the full transfer took until 2011.

Disclosure of the letter added to pressure on Blair to quit as the Quartet's representative.

Qtel made a donation to the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women in 2012-13.

In February 2013, Cherie Blair was invited to a ceremony at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain to mark Qtel's rebranding as Ooredoo, Arabic for "I want". The company's chairman, Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud al-Thani, who last December also became the Qatar Investment Authority's chief executive, addressed the "invitation-only" event.

Besides a presentation from Cherie Blair, the ceremony also featured the guest appearance of Nasser al-Attiyah, the Qatari Olympic medallist.

Seven months later, Ooredoo and the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women announced a new partnership in Burma (or Myanmar) to "extend the benefits of mobile technology to underserved communities and support women's entrepreneurship".

They said in a joint statement at the time: "Ooredoo and the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women are developing a franchisee model to enable 30,000 women by 2016 to become entrepreneurs by selling prepaid Ooredoo airtime to their communities."

The statement quoted al-Thani as saying: "Ooredoo and the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women have supported thousands of women entrepreneurs in Indonesia, and we shall use that expertise to enrich the lives of people in Myanmar."

And Cherie Blair added: "Ooredoo understands the value of women's enterprise development and is doing excellent work internationally for women's empowerment... I am delighted that my foundation is partnering with Ooredoo to give women the support that they need to become mobile retail agents."

The partnership, the statement explained, "extends the long-lasting collaboration between the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women and Ooredoo."

In Indonesia, Cherie Blair's foundation worked with Ooredoo's Indosat on developing "Usaha Wanita" (Business Woman), which launched in 2012 "to provide women with entrepreneurial advice through mobile technology".

In its annual accounts for 2012-13, Cherie Blair's foundation recorded its thanks for the "generous support" from a range of donors and partners, including "key supporters" such as Ooredoo - and JP Morgan.

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[David Hencke](#) is co-author, with Francis Beckett and Nick Kochan, of '[Blair Inc: The Man Behind the Mask](#)', published last month.

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