



Consumer Alert: Avoiding Fraudulent Charities and Scams While Donating to International Conflict Relief

BALTIMORE, MD (October 18, 2023) – As violence in the wake of Hamas’ attack on Israel continues to unfold, scammers are setting their sights on people in the United States who are looking for opportunities to donate money to help those affected by this devastating conflict.

Unfortunately, unscrupulous individuals often use international conflict as an opportunity to prey upon those wishing to offer aid, so you'll want to be on the lookout for fraudulent charities and other scams.

Before donating any money to a charitable organization, check to see if the charity in which you are interested is registered with the [Maryland Secretary of State’s Public Registry](#). Several websites (such as [GuideStar](#) and [Charity Navigator](#)) provide information on an organization’s financials, mission statements, and more. This information may help you decide how to allocate your giving. Bogus charities frequently use names and logos that are slightly changed but resemble well-known, legitimate organizations.

Some strategies you want to keep in mind to protect yourself from fraud include:

- Never agree to give money over the phone or to a door-to-door solicitor. Ask the caller or solicitor for written information about the charity and read it before making your decision.
- Avoid high-pressure and time-sensitive tactics, such as solicitors who are urging you to make an immediate donation. Even if the charity has an urgent need for money, the need will still exist after you have vetted the organization to make sure it’s legitimate.
- Be wary about clicking on requests for donations found in emails, on a third-party website, or on social media. Scammers frequently lure consumers through social media or emails to fake websites, which are set up to steal personal and/or financial information or could release malware onto your computer.
- Do not respond to requests for prepaid credit cards, gift cards, or bitcoin. Someone asking for donations in prepaid credit cards, gift cards, or bitcoin is most likely a scammer.

- Do not agree to send money through a courier or wire. Legitimate charitable organizations do not send couriers to pick up contributions.

Read more about charitable donations in our “[Keeping Your Eyes Open When Donating to Charities](#)” Consumer’s Edge.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/101823CA.pdf>