

November 12, 2015

## EU funding to political NGOs – Commission Discharge for 2014

### **Background**

Ahead of the 2014 Commission Discharge, we encourage members of the EP CONT committee, including rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs, to consider the following findings, relevant to the year 2014.

The European Commission allocates sizable amounts annually to NGOs, ostensibly in order to support bolster EU values and policy. This includes aid to humanitarian, civil society, and advocacy organizations. The money is allocated through a variety of mechanisms in the Commission.

Despite the stated justifications for such funding, NGO Monitor research shows that, in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, EU funds are transferred to organizations and activists that promote agendas that are contrary to EU values and policy. This includes boycotts of Israel (support for BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions), anti-peace campaigning, support for a “one state” framework or the elimination of the Jewish character of Israel, encouraging violence, demonization, and even antisemitic rhetoric and blood libels. EU funding also strengthens the ability of these political advocacy NGOs to influence EU policy, through personal relationships, briefings, and consultations in Brussels and EU satellite offices.

Furthermore, EU funding to NGOs is often secretive and lacks transparency. Crucial information regarding projects and partners, such as evaluation reports and amounts redirected, is withheld from the public’s view and scrutiny.

### *(1) Inconsistency with EU policy*

The EU delivers funds to NGOs that promote inconsistent, and even contradictory, agendas to its own. Below are some of the examples (see appendix for amounts of funding in 2014):

- **Anti-normalization**

The Palestinian NGO “Code of Conduct” obliges signatories to reject cooperation with Israel and Israelis –

*“The signatory NGOs also undertake to be in line with the national agenda without any normalization activities with the occupier [Israel], neither at the political-security nor the cultural or development levels.”*

This Code was funded and facilitated by the EU-funded NGO Development Center (NDC), and has been implemented by four Palestinian umbrella NGOs that are widely acknowledged (including in EU consultations) as representing Palestinian civil society.<sup>1</sup> NDC's "Strategic Framework to Strengthen the Palestinian NGO Sector" for 2013-2017 also includes an "Anti-normalization Campaign."

- **BDS**

- [Ma'an Development Center](#): published a [guide](#) to advancing BDS campaigns.
- [YMCA East Jerusalem](#): collaborates with other organizations in platforms that are used to mobilize churches worldwide to support BDS.
- [IKV Pax Christi](#): collaborates in events and with partners that promote BDS. Co-published an October 2012 report, "[Trading Away Peace](#)," calling on EU and member states governments to wage political warfare through various forms of economic sanctions on Israel.
- Grassroots Jerusalem (GJ): encourages "Global Mobilization" efforts (see "BDS initiatives map from GJ website" in appendix). Its [website states](#) that "Grassroots Jerusalem strongly supports the global BDS call as a strategic tool to hold "Israel" accountable for its oppression of the Palestinian people." Refers to the western part of Jerusalem as "occupied."  
GJ issued a "[Guide to advocacy](#)" with the EU logo (see cover page in appendix) in August 2013, which guides actions against various companies that allegedly "profit[] off of settlements construction and expansion." Companies targeted include Toyota, Veolia, Volvo, and many other international and Israeli companies.
- [Coalition of Women for Peace](#): involved in campaigns to divest from Israeli companies. Initiated the BDS project "Who Profits" (which became a separately registered organization in January 2014).
- [Holy Land Trust](#): signed the 2005 "Palestinian Civil Society Call," as well as the "Kairos Palestine" document that denies the Jewish historical connection to Israel.
- Union of Agricultural Work Committees Association ([UAWC](#)): signatory to the 2005 "[Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS](#)." Israeli NGO "Shurat HaDin" [claims](#) that UAWC "was established by the PFLP," "is controlled by senior PFLP operatives," and that it acts in coordination with the PFLP, an EU designated terror organization.

- **"One State"**

- [The Alternative Information Center's](#) (AIC) co-founder stated that "one has to unequivocally reject the very idea of a Jewish state, whatever will be its borders." AIC published an article mentioning that "normalization [with Israel] is betrayal of the homeland."

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<sup>1</sup> The four umbrella groups are Palestinian General Union for Charitable Societies, Palestinian NGO Network, National Institute for Palestinian NGOs, and the Palestinian General Union for NGOs – Gaza.

- [Applied Research Institute Jerusalem](#) (ARIJ) supports a Palestinian “right of return,” which is inconsistent with a two-state framework.
- Birzeit University published [guidelines for Palestinian advocacy](#), asserting that Israel, regardless of its borders, is among the “racist regimes which are absolutely prohibited in their entirety.”

*(2) EU funding of NGOs lacks transparency and accountability*

The EU invests billions of euros annually on external aid, [with €82 billion made available](#) for the years 2014-2020. This includes support for humanitarian aid, development, and advocacy. A significant portion of this aid is provided to local NGOs indirectly, via large aid organizations (mainly church-based organizations). This method poses great challenges in ensuring transparency and making grantees partner organizations accountable for the use of EU money.

- **Aid Groups** – extensive funding is provided to aid organizations and church based groups, which then transfer the money to other organizations according to their independent discretion. In the process, tracing EU funds becomes difficult, if not impossible, nor can the EU hold the end recipient accountable for misuse or misconduct. In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, organizations like DanChurchAid, Christian Aid, and International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) receive EU funding and, in turn, support and empower radical anti-Israel organizations.
  - [DanChurchAid](#) (DCA): total EU funding for 2014 was roughly €6 million, including two projects aimed at the Palestinian territories (an [ongoing project](#) from July 2013 of €1,316,841, and the other for €480,811). DCA’s [partners](#) include NGOs that promote BDS ([WCLAC](#), Ma’an Development Center – see above, and [APRODEV](#), among others), “one state” (ARIJ – see above), and even antisemitism (see [below for offensive cartoons from competitions held by BADIL](#)).
  - [Christian Aid](#): total EU funding for 2014 was roughly €5.5 million, including two projects aimed at the “Middle East” (totaling in €426,439). Some of Christian Aid’s partners support “one state,” BDS, and other forms of political warfare ([Zochrot](#), [ICAHD](#), [EAPPI](#), [AIC](#), [PARC](#), [Sabeel](#), and [WCC](#)).
  - [FIDH](#): The EU is a major donor to FIDH, however due to lack of transparency amounts and projects cannot be retrieved. FIDH supports BDS, and its Vice President Shawan Jabarin allegedly has ties to an EU designated terrorist organization (according to Israeli Supreme Court and others). Some of FIDH’s partners support BDS and other methods of political warfare ([Al-Haq](#), [Al-Mezan](#)).

Other than project grants from the EU, FIDH received between 2011-2014 structural and “operational” funding from the EU, allowing further lack of accountability and in contradiction to EU policy of funding projects and not NGOs (see below).
- **ECHO** – ECHO’s grantees are free to channel their EU funding to local partner organizations. This complicates efforts to track funds, and further reduces transparency and accountability.

This also creates discrepancies between databases. According to the Financial Transparency System ([FTS](#)), during 2014 no money was allocated to Palestine from ECHO, while according to ECHO's [own financial report](#), Palestine received €33.5 million.

- For example, the EU is described as the first “Main Donor” to [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) (NRC) on the NGO's [budget for Palestine for 2014](#). The NRC transfers funds to “local lawyers and NGOs to carry out legal counselling and represent cases in court.” NRC reported that it funded 677 cases before Israeli courts, in what was described by a lawyer affiliated with the NRC project as “try[ing] every possible legal measure to disrupt the Israeli judicial system...” Details on amounts channeled to specific NGOs are not provided by NRC or its government donors.
- ECHO provided a total of €1,235,433 in 2014 to [Islamic Relief Worldwide](#) (IRW), which was banned in Israel for allegedly funneling money to Hamas.
- **Accountability** - The EU is inconsistent as to the overall objectives in funding NGOs. According to a [report](#) mapping Palestinian NGOs, EU support is “... focused on supporting the engagement of civil society organisations in policy dialogue and in governance, not merely as partners in project and programme implementation, but as partners in policy making and management of public resources; thus recognising both the legitimacy and the capacity of CSOs to play an autonomous and active role in partnership with public institutions and other actors.” In contradiction, when criticized for funding NGOs with harmful agendas that contradict EU policy, the EU's [recurring response](#) is that it “funds *projects* submitted by NGOs, in line with (the) EU's fundamental principles and values, but *not NGOs themselves*” (emphasis added).

**Appendix**

**BADIL Cartoon Competition**

2010



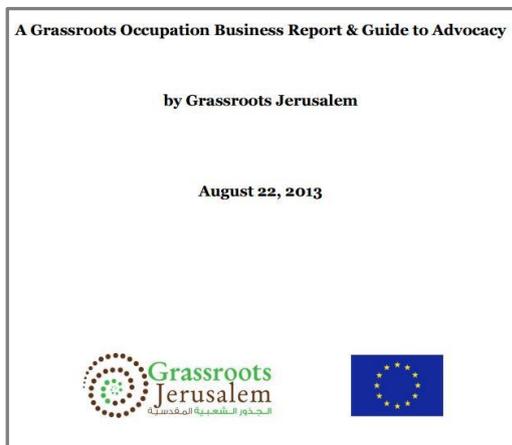
2015



**BDS initiatives map from GJ website**



**GJ "Guide to Advocacy" cover page**



### NGOs discussed in this report and their EU funding in 2014 (and other relevant years)

[Due to a lack of transparency, further funding is possible]

NGO	Funding	Political activities
NGO Development Center	€500,000 for 2013 and 2014; website names the EU as a donor (undisclosed amounts)	BDS, anti-normalization
Union of Agricultural Work Committees Association	€ 6,089,270 in 2014 (FTS)	BDS, alleged links to terrorism
Ma'an Development	€989,778 in 2014 (FTS)	BDS, demonization, describes Israel as occupier "since 1948"
YMCA East Jerusalem	€491,083 in 2012-17 together with Y-Care;	BDS; partners include NGOs involved in demonization and international advocacy
IKV Pax Christi	€465,902 in 2014-16 together with other organizations	Apartheid, demonization, "right of return" / one state rhetoric
Grassroots Jerusalem	Claims to have received 28% of 2014 total funding directly from the European Commission (indirect funding includes DCA and others)	BDS, global coordination of political activists
Coalition of Women for Peace	€94,966 in 2014	BDS and establishing Who Profits project, demonization
Holy Land Trust	€24,864 in 2014 (FTS)	BDS, demonization
Alternative Information Center	€371,602 between 2011-14; ₪151,577 between 2012-13 (Israeli registrar)	One-state, BDS, anti-normalization, demonization
Applied Research Institute Jerusalem	€828,839 in 2014 (FTS)	One-state, BDS, demonization
Bir Zeit University	€112,306 in 2014 to "the board of trustees of Bir Zeit University" (FTS)	One-state, anti-normalization
DanChurchAid	€5,945,083 total EU funding for 2014 (FTS)	BDS, demonization, funds antisemitic NGOs and lawfare
Christian Aid	£5,494,000 in 2014 in total (Christian Aid 2014 annual report)	BDS, partners promote one state / "right of return" / elimination of Jewish character of Israel
FIDH	Unclear. EU described as major donor.	BDS, alleged links to terrorism, lawfare
Norwegian Refugee Council	Total amount in 2014 €35,743,530. €2.1 Million in projects related to Arab-Israeli conflict (FTS)	Abusing legal means, partner NGOs promote BDS, one-state.
Islamic Relief Worldwide	Total of €1,235,433 in 2014 (FTS)	Allegedly channeling money to terror organizations