

August 3, 2014

### French NGO-statements on Israel's Military Operation Against Hamas: Exposing Israel's Demonization

The diplomatic and political dimensions of the war in Gaza are now receiving significant attention. This is the context for "soft power" attempts to criminalize Israeli military operations and launch "fact-finding investigations."

NGO Monitor, a Jerusalem-based research institute, has prepared the following information sheet on the major role of French non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the political war. Our detailed analyses of this and previous conflicts are available on our website ([www.ngo-monitor.org](http://www.ngo-monitor.org)), and our experts, including Prof. Gerald Steinberg of Bar Ilan University and president of NGO Monitor, are available for interview.

#### Background

- As part of their larger campaign to demonize and delegitimize Israel, European politicized NGOs are pushing for an international investigation into alleged Israeli "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity" committed during the current Israel-Hamas conflict.
- Under the façade of balance and apolitical, universal human rights, these NGOs have been active in efforts to justify unprofessional UN investigations, as seen in the 2009 Goldstone report.
- In support of this campaign, French NGOs such as FIDH and ACF condemn Israel in statements that gravely distort international humanitarian law and repeat unsupported allegations of "deliberate, systematic, and widespread targeting of Palestinian civilians," "collective punishment," and similar claims.
- In addition, the French government provides funding, through direct and indirect processes, to Israeli and Palestinian NGOs that make legal and factual claims, without the necessary expertise or access to objective facts on the ground.
- As NGOs continue to make unfounded statements that are often repeated in the media, it is essential that journalists and the public:
  - 1) Recognize the central role of human rights NGOs in the political dimensions of war.
  - 2) Closely scrutinize NGO allegations, in the same way claims by other political actors (i.e. politicians, government and military officials) are held accountable.

#### Statements by FIDH - Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme

Statement to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC); July 22, 2014

- "The imbalance of power in favor of Israel cannot be overlooked, nor can the fact that the population bearing the overwhelming brunt of these hostilities, in terms of physical, emotional and infrastructural damage, is the Palestinian civilian population. ...Nevertheless, **the Israeli military has deliberately attacked such houses and other ostensibly civilian objects and public spaces including hospitals, schools, mosques, sports clubs, and cafes**....In light of the above-mentioned information, and in the interest of preventing further harm to civilian populations, we call on the UN Human Rights Council, during its upcoming Special Session, to: **...Strongly condemn the failure of Israel to abide by international humanitarian law, including the underpinning principles of military necessity, proportionality and distinction**" (emphasis added)

[Press release](#) (July 10, 2014):

- “Our organization urges the Israeli authorities and Palestinian armed groups to end violence against the civilians and stop the hostilities. **Since 2008, violations of international humanitarian law have been committed in total impunity by both parties, in particular during the Israeli military operations “Pillar of Defence” in November 2012 and “Cast Lead” in December 2008 until January 2009.** While justice is essential to deter further the crimes and to build any peace process, impunity has since been the rule and Occupation of Palestine by Israel had kept developing. FIDH recalls its analysis that the current situation falls within the jurisdiction of the ICC and its call for the ICC to be triggered according to appropriate channels.” (emphasis added)

**Statements by – ACF Action Contre Le Faim**

[Statement to the United Nations Human Rights Council \(UNHRC\)](#); July 23, 2014

- “In what appears to be a **widespread policy of targeting civilian objects including livelihood-related structures**, the homes of 3,050 families’ have been destroyed or severely damaged, and a total of 135,500 people are in need of shelter assistance due to damage to their homes....**attacks on homes cannot be justified under international humanitarian law unless such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations, and confers a distinct military advantage. The parties are to be reminded that reprisals against civilian property are prohibited.** We are concerned with reports of misuse of civilian structures for military purposes, rendering them objects for military attack, and remind all parties that distinction between civilians and combatants must be strictly adhered to.”

**These statements are part of a larger strategy used by anti-Israel NGOs, to delegitimize and demonize Israel, which includes boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) and “lawfare” campaigns.**

**European Government Funding for FIDH**

Country	Funding Mechanism	Amounts in Euros (2012)
Sweden	SIDA	857.047
France	Paris municipality and Foreign Ministry	678.527
Finland	Foreign Ministry	375.632
Netherlands	Foreign Ministry	274.538
UK	Foreign Ministry	47.404
Norway	Foreign Ministry	690.619

**European Government Funding for ACF**

Country	Funding Mechanism	Amounts in Euros (2012)
EU	ECHO and EC	12.374.938
France	Foreign Ministry	514.274
UK	Foreign Ministry	4.564.978

In addition, the French government has provided funding to a number of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs that have issued many unfound statements condemning Israel:

**Israel Social TV:** [Facebook post](#): **“How do you turn blood into money?** Like every military operation, ‘Protective Edge’ is fertile ground for testing new weapons and improving the killing

mechanisms. **For there is a need to maintain Israel's place in exporting unmanned aerial vehicles, and there is no better place for that than bombing the Middle East's densest area.**" (Emphasis added; translated from the original Hebrew by NGO Monitor)

**Zochrot:** [Facebook Post](#): "The violent reality we are witnessing these days, that takes a heavy toll from many, especially the Palestinian Refugees, is a direct outcome of a racist regime which established itself based on an ongoing destruction, dispossession, expulsion and occupation, while turning 70% of the Palestinian population into refugees."

**French funding for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs:**

NGO	Funding Mechanism	Amounts
Israel Social TV	CCFD	€ 4000 (2012)
Zochrot	CCFD	NIS 141,861 (2013)