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

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

In this context, NGO Monitor, a Jerusalem-based research institute, has prepared the following information sheet on the major role of Swedish 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), 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, Swedish NGOs such as Diakonia 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 Swedish government provides funding, through direct and indirect funding 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 Diakonia

- [Press statement \(July 13, 2014\)](#)
 - Diakonia is extremely alarmed by the current escalation in conflict between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip and calls for an immediate ceasefire. In addition to the terrible loss of life and injury, **Diakonia is particularly concerned by the violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the ongoing lack of accountability that characterize and perpetuate the conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)...** There are widespread reports of an Israeli policy of direct attacks against civilian homes in the Gaza Strip. **Such attacks potentially amount to war crimes...** "
 - The closure of the Gaza Strip - **collective punishment** The population of the Gaza Strip remains subjected to the wider separation policy that Israel implements through the closure of Gaza. **This policy, which amounts to collective punishment, is directly responsible for the atrocious living conditions experienced by the Palestinian population in Gaza...**
- Statements by Diakonia staff

- [Twitter \(July 24, 2014\)](#): “The outside world must stop Israel’s violations of international law and the constant oppression of the Palestinians.” (Joakim Wohlfeil, Policy Advisor at Diakonia)

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 Diakonia

Country	Funding Mechanism	Amounts (2012)
Sweden	Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)	170.5 SEK (2014)

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

Al Haq – [Statement to the UNHRC \(July 22, 2014\)](#): “the Israeli military has deliberately attacked such houses and other ostensibly civilian objects and public spaces including hospitals, schools, mosques, sports clubs, and cafes...”. “Strongly condemn the failure of Israel to abide by international humanitarian law, including the underpinning principles of military necessity, proportionality and distinction”

Sabeel – [Facebook post \(July 8, 2014\)](#): “The rockets from Gaza will not end the occupation. ..the military might of Israel will not defeat our people...in few days or a couple of weeks a cease fire will occur but only after many mothers will weep and bury their dead...may God’s power silence the violence and bring an end to the occupation the source of all evil.”

B’tselem, PCATI, GISHA, Adalah, ACRI, Hamoked– [Joint statement to the Israeli Attorney General \(July 21, 2014\)](#): “The reports and data which have accumulated thus far regarding the nature of the strikes and the level of injury to noncombatant civilians as a result of these strikes raise serious concern of severe violations of international humanitarian law, and specifically the laws of war...”

NGO	Funding Mechanism	Amounts
Al Haq	SIDA	Not Disclosed
	Diakonia	Not Disclosed
Sabeel	Diakonia	NIS 217, 716 (2012)
B’Tselem	NDC ¹	NIS 1,594,770 (2012-2013)
	Diakonia	NIS 558,952 (2012-2013)
PCATI	NDC	Not Disclosed
Adalah	NDC	NIS 110,193 (2012)
ACRI	NDC	NIS 635,168 (2012-2013)
	Diakonia	NIS 684, 083 (2012-2013)
Hamoked	NDC	NIS 1,301,569 (2012-2013)
GISHA	NDC	NIS 452,733 (2012-2013)

¹ The NDC (NGO Development Center) is a joint-government funding pool which includes: The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark. As of 2014, this funding mechanism is known as the [“Human Rights and international Humanitarian Law Secretariat”](#).