NGO MONITOR
Making NGOs Accountable

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EU Funding for Hamas Terror via Islamic Relief Worldwide?
The Burden of Proof is on Europe

Background

- The Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) is an international organization based in the UK, with offices in Gaza and the West Bank, ostensibly working as an "international relief and development charity."
- **On June 19, 2014, Israel's Defense Minister declared IRW to be illegal, based on its alleged role in funneling money to Hamas**, and banned it from operating in Israel and the West Bank. (Hamas is a designated terror organization by Israel, the U.S., EU, and Canada.)
- Media sources have reported that the decision was made after "the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet), the coordinator for government activities in the territories, and legal authorities provided incriminating information against IRW."
- According to its financial reports, European governments, including the EU, are primary funders of IRW.

EU Funding and Evaluation

- In 2012, the European Commission awarded £2,169,340 to IRW.
- In correspondence with NGO Monitor, John Gatt-Rutter, the Head of Delegation to the West Bank and Gaza, refused to release substantive information, simply stating that "the Commission does not provide global funding to NGOs, but supports specific projects and well-defined actions which are carried out by NGOs in full compliance with EC rules and procedures in the management of the activities, which includes screening and check compliance on the eligibility of the organisations."
- Mr. Gatt-Rutter also refused to take responsibility for investigating IRW's alleged misconduct, "At this juncture, we are not aware of anything which would suggest that IRW is not in good standing with its regulatory body."
- For the full correspondence between NGO Monitor and the EU, see Appendix A.

Given the serious nature of the allegations, and particularly in light of the current war with Hamas, the European Commission should immediately conduct a thorough review of Islamic Relief Worldwide, in cooperation with the relevant Israeli and other authorities, to ensure that EU taxpayer funds are not channeled to terrorist organizations.

Questions for the European Commission

- In light of the serious allegations against IRW and its current status in Israel, is the European Commission planning to open an investigation into the activities of IRW?
- The diversion of foreign aid to terror activities in Gaza has emerged as a central element in the conflict. How will the European Commission assure both EU and Israeli citizens that funding to IRW has not been channeled to terror groups?

European government funding to Islamic Relief Worldwide

Source	Funding Mechanism	Amounts
UK	DFID	£1,400,000 (2012)
Switzerland	Swiss Foreign Ministry	£52,942 (2012)
EU	European Commission	£2,169,340 (2012)
Sweden	SIDA	SEK 24,000,000 (2013)
Spain	AECID	£243,942 (2012)

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Appendix A: Correspondence between NGO Monitor and the EU

NGO Monitor letter to John Gatt Rutter, Head of Delegation

Dear Mr. John Gatt Rutter,

On June 19, Israel's Minister of Defense signed a warrant declaring the NGO Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) as illegal, based on information regarding the involvement of this organization in terrorism.

The European Commission is listed as a partner/funder (2012) in the reports of the IRW. NGO Monitor is preparing a report on the relationships between the IRW and its governmental donors and partners, and we would appreciate your responses to the following questions:

1. Did the EC provide any funding to IRW in 2013 or 2014? If so, in what amounts, and through which EC frameworks? (EIDHR, ECHO, etc.)

2. What mechanisms are used to ensure that funding or cooperation with the IRW is not linked to terrorist activities or incitement to violence? Please provide documentation or links to specific reports or evaluations.

3. In addition to any funding, what other forms of cooperation have taken place between the EC and the IRW between 2012 and 2014?

In order that we can complete our report in a timely manner, the deadline for responses is 26 June.

Sincerely,

Response:

Dear NGO-monitor desk,

Thank you for your e-mail.

The Office of the EU Representative would like to recall that under its funding instruments, the Commission does not provide global funding to NGOs, but supports specific projects and well-defined actions which are carried out by NGOs in full compliance with EC rules and procedures in the management of the activities, which includes screening and check compliance on the eligibility of the organisations. Islamic Relief Worldwide is an NGO registered with the Charity Commission for England & Wales, the body responsible for regulating the NGO sector in E&W. At this juncture, we are not aware of anything which would suggest that IRW is not in good standing with its regulatory body.

In line with EU's objectives of transparency, information regarding the projects that are implemented by civil society organisations and that are partly financed by the European Union, is publicly available on our website at:
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/projects/overview/index_en.htm

FYI under 2010 Non State Actors Programme, a project supporting "CBO's and neighbourhood committees as social actors for development in the Gaza Middle District" was awarded to IRW in partnership with Civitas Institute. The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of Palestinian non state actors in defining and implementing poverty alleviation strategies. The

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project implementation is 1/7/2012 - 31/10/2014, for an amount of €366,026 (EU contribution of €274,519).

Best regards,

John Gatt-Rutter
Head of Delegation