

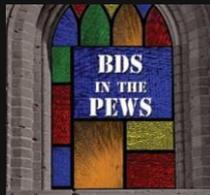
NGO MONITOR

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**CATHOLIC AID SOCIETIES AND
POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS
DIRECTED AT ISRAEL**

Caritas Internationalis

January 2014



This report was produced by

BDS in the Pews

A Project of NGO Monitor

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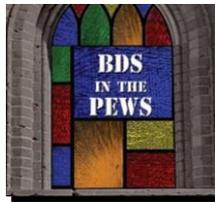
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NGO Monitor's mission is to provide information and analysis, promote accountability, and support discussion on the reports and activities of NGOs claiming to advance human rights and humanitarian

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Table of Contents

Key Points.....	1
Background	2
Finances	2
Bias in the Arab-Israeli Conflict.....	3
Appendix A: Caritas Members Involved in the Arab-Israeli Conflict.....	5
Appendix B: NGO Monitor Letter to Caritas Internationalis.....	6

Key Points

- [Caritas Internationalis](#) is the organizational umbrella of 164 official Vatican-affiliated Catholic aid and humanitarian organizations worldwide.
- [Caritas Internationalis](#) holds strongly partisan positions regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict.
 - The group's official UN representative in New York endorsed the Palestinian claim of a "right of return."
 - The organization formally supports the annual [International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People](#).
- Eleven of Caritas' 164 world-wide chapters demonstrate serious partiality against Israel in their consistent funding of radicalized anti-Israel NGOs and other activities related to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Background

In 1951, thirteen country-based Caritas organizations formed the Caritas Internationalis network. Today, [Caritas Internationalis](#) consists of [seven regions](#) and 164 Catholic organizations “working in humanitarian emergencies and international development.” Headquartered in Rome, with offices in Geneva and New York, the Caritas Internationalis [General Secretariat](#) coordinates the organization’s responses to humanitarian emergencies.

Caritas Internationalis’ [bylaws](#) stipulates that its Executive Board should consist of seven individuals - “three of which are appointed by the Holy See and one is elected by the Representative Council.” Caritas Internationalis’ [leadership consists](#) of a President, Vice Presidents, Secretary-General, and Treasurer, all of whom are elected by the Caritas General Assembly. In turn, the General Assembly is composed of representatives from all the Caritas member organizations and meets every four years at the Vatican. Candidates for President, Secretary-General, and Treasurer must also be approved by the Holy See.

Caritas Internationalis holds [Canonical Legal Status](#), which grants the Pontifical Council the right to appoint an “[Ecclesiastical Advisor](#)” to a four-year term. This Ecclesiastical Advisor has full speaking rights in all Caritas meetings, but no voting rights

Fundamentally, Caritas Internationalis serves as an umbrella organization that coordinates and supports member activities, provides a platform for interaction between the Vatican and member organizations, but allows individual Caritas members to implement activities in their areas of interest and influence.

Finances

- From 2007-2010, Caritas Internationalis’ total aggregate income was [€15 million](#) (an average of approximately [€4.3 million](#) per annum). This includes a 2009 spike in income derived from “contributions from external donors” totaling [€6.8 million](#). Total expenditures for 2007-2010 ranged from [€3 million](#) to [€3.8 million](#).
- Income projections for 2011-2015 include yearly incomes ranging from [€2.4 million](#) to [€2.9 million](#), and yearly expenditures are projected to range from [€2.3 million](#) to [€4.3 million](#), with an approximate average of [€40,000](#) directed annually to the Middle East and North Africa. The [report](#) on projected income does not specify the amount scheduled to be allocated to the Israeli-Palestinian arena.

- In 2012, Caritas Internationalis participated in an [Emergency Appeal for Gaza](#), which “helped Palestinians with no access to healthcare, who are financially insecure, unprepared for winter and who require psychological support,” with a budget of [€1.6 million](#).

Bias in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Caritas Internationalis operates in “[Palestine](#)” as part of its “Conflicts and Disasters” response program. Caritas Internationalis [tasks itself](#), through local Caritas Jerusalem, Jordan and Syria, with responding to “the emergency needs of the people of Palestine – regardless of their race or religion” and “continu[ing] to believe in peace and justice and to hope for a better future.”

Over the last dozen years, Caritas Internationalis has taken a number of positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict that demonstrate a high degree of partisanship. (A letter to Caritas Internationalis (see Appendix B) requesting clarification of its official position on the “two-states” framework received no response):

- Joseph Donnelly, the group’s official UN representative in New York, [endorsed](#) the Palestinian claim to a “right of return” for the millions of descendants of the 1948 refugees: “The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are defined by law as the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and **the return of Palestine refugees to their ancestral homes and lands**” (emphasis added). The demand for such a “return” is largely recognized as a call for the elimination of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people through demographic means.
- A call to “recognize Palestine” at the UN on the Caritas Internationalis [blog](#).
- Recognition of and support for the annual [International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People](#) on the Caritas Internationalis blog. In 2011, then Caritas Jerusalem Director Claudette Habesch issued a [statement](#) marking this day, as did [Joseph Donnelly](#).
- Rhetoric that misrepresents the context of the conflict in Gaza and the West Bank. This includes a [post](#) by Caritas Jerusalem’s Communications Officer describing Hamas terrorists as “militants” and suggesting that the November 2012 Gaza clashes were due to the fact that Israel wants to use “force” to compel the Palestinians to “give up their rights to the land.”
- A [decontextualized account of the tragic deaths](#) of two Gazans, which names “fear” as the cause of death after Israeli aircraft bombed nearby Palestine Stadium during the

November 2012 conflict with Hamas. This account avoids discussion of how terrorists used [Palestine Stadium in Gaza to fire rockets](#) at Tel Aviv.

- A call for “[an end to the blockade](#)” of Gaza in the aftermath of the flotilla incident in 2010.
- A [description of the Spring 2012 fuel crisis](#) in Gaza that describes problems with one of Gaza’s power units, which “rarely runs due to shortages in industrial fuel, which is sent from Israel.” The blog post does not mention that [Hamas’ reluctance to accept fuel from Israel](#) contributed to the crisis, and that transfers of Israeli fuel ultimately ended the shortage.
- A 2004 [poster](#) graphically portraying the Israeli security fence with the words “For peace in the Holy Land, END THE OCCUPATION.” The poster ignored the hundreds of terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians that had occurred in the previous several years. The poster featured Caritas Internationalis’ Vatican headquarters address and listed the endorsement of 151 of its international branches.
- Caritas participated in a June 2003 conference (“[An End to the Occupation. A Just Peace in Israel-Palestine. The role of the Academia](#)”) with other highly politicized NGOs including [Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions](#), [Physicians for Human Rights-Israel](#), [Ta’ayush](#), [B’Tselem](#) and [Machsom Watch](#).

Appendix A: Caritas Members Involved in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Country	Caritas Member¹
Austria	Caritas Austria
Canada	Developpement et Paix
France	Secours Catholique
Ireland	Trocaire
Italy	Caritas Italiana
Netherlands	Cordaid
Spain	Caritas Espanola
Switzerland	Caritas Switzerland
UK	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
US	Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
US	Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA)

¹ Caritas Internationalis comprises 164 members worldwide; these are involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Appendix B: NGO Monitor Letter to Caritas Internationalis



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9 January, 2014

Dear Mr. Nicholson,

NGO Monitor (www.ngo-monitor.org), a Jerusalem-based research institute, is preparing a series of reports on funding to various political advocacy NGOs that are active in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including some members of the Caritas Internationalis network.

In the course of our research, we found a [statement](#) by the head of the Caritas Internationalis Delegation in New York, Joseph Cornelius Donnelly, supporting the Palestinian claim to a “right of return”: “The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are defined by law as the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the return of Palestine refugees to their ancestral homes and lands.”

In light of these comments, we have the following questions:

- 1) Does Mr. Donnelly’s statement constitute an official position of Caritas Internationalis?
- 2) If so, how is this political position consistent with a “two-state” resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict?

Please provide any response and comments by **January 16, 2014**.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Nath
Researcher