



European Funding for Palestinian "Cultural Resistance"

April 2018

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 agendas.

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Organization in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2013

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INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) and European governments provide funding to a number of Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for culture, art, and related activities. In 2017, the EU budgeted €400,000 for Palestinian cultural NGOs for “support to Euro-Palestinian cultural activities.”¹

Detailed research and analysis of this funding reveal that many of the supported organizations utilize cultural activities to indoctrinate children and youth, promoting rejectionist and violent agendas. Often framed as a form of “cultural resistance,” these activities are not presented as a non-violent alternative, but rather as a “tool in the liberation battle.” As described by one group, “cultural resistance” is defined as “not a substitute for any other form of resistance; It is a complement.”² Various forms of resistance can be described as a large mosaic where each stone represents a different form.” In other words, cultural resistance results in the use of art as a vehicle for indoctrination, incitement, hatred, and sympathy to terrorism. As such, organizations involved in promoting cultural resistance directly contradict European values.

This report provides examples of this phenomenon and places it within the context of the EU’s concerns regarding funding to Palestinian NGOs claiming to promote cultural agendas.

EU STRATEGY FOR CULTURE IN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The EU views inter-cultural dialogue as a way to “contribute to addressing major global challenges – such as conflict prevention and resolution... countering violent extremism” and as consistent with the EU commitment to “promoting a tolerant, pluralistic approach to international cultural relations.”³

However, in the Palestinian context, cultural activities funded by the EU and member states are often detrimental to these objectives.

The European Commission (EC) invested considerable effort in developing a “strategic approach to culture in the EU’s external relations,” launching a Preparatory Action in 2013 consisting of “an extensive mapping and consultation process” covering 54 countries.⁴

The resulting Palestine Country Report concludes that “The EU **must not lose sight of the fact** that

¹ European Commission, “International Cooperation and Development: Calls for Proposals and Tenders,” January 17, 2018: [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-service-](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-service-vic-)

[vic-es/index.cfm?ADSSChk=1504443404190&do=publi.detPUB&orderby=upd&searchtype=QS&page=1&orderbyad=Desc&aoref=154711&nbPubliList=15&userlanguage=en](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-service-vic-es/index.cfm?ADSSChk=1504443404190&do=publi.detPUB&orderby=upd&searchtype=QS&page=1&orderbyad=Desc&aoref=154711&nbPubliList=15&userlanguage=en)

² The Freedom Theatre, “Annual Report 2016,” June 16, 2017:

https://issuu.com/freedomtheatrejenin/docs/annual_report_2016_final

³ European Commission, “Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council,” June 8, 2016:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0029&from=EN>

⁴ European Commission, “Preparatory Action for Culture in External Relations,”

https://ec.europa.eu/culture/initiatives/external-relations_en

European activities in Palestine [in the culture and art domains] take place in a context that is **not entirely in line with European values** such as peace building, gender equality, democracy and human rights" (emphases added).⁵

This conclusion is based on the finding that EU values of "peace-building, democracy, and gender equality" present "stumbling blocks," for Palestinian civil society even though "Palestinian cultural NGOs depend almost exclusively on foreign financial support." According to the report, "They [Palestinians] even said they felt threatened: 'You want us to look the same as you', or: 'We have to flirt with the EU in order to receive your money,'" adding that "Palestinians would refuse to cooperate with Israelis and would resist if the EU attempted to force them to do so."⁶

The country report further points out that the Palestinian Authority considers culture to be an important "tool in the liberation battle" and that "cultural activities within the Palestinian Territories and cultural relations with the outside world are highly politicised."⁷ In this vein, the report acknowledges that "the Palestinian Territories seem to be a kind of laboratory for both the positive and negative impact of culture – culture as a force that reinforces self-empowerment and initiates dialogue, but at the same time **is a conduit for creating and spreading new images of hostility, as well as for tracing out and cementing boundaries**" (emphasis added).⁸

It appears these findings were not taken into account in subsequent EU funding decisions. In fact, a number of Palestinian groups received a "Cultural Diplomacy" grant in 2014 for the express purpose of "increase[ing] public awareness of EU core values."⁹ Yet, as detailed below, the agendas and activities of these groups – some of which openly glorify violence – stray far from even the most permissive understanding of these values.

Following the Preparatory Action, the European Commission consolidated a "strategy for international cultural relations" aimed at "encouraging cultural cooperation between the EU and its partner countries and promoting a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental values."¹⁰

In April 2017, in response to a parliamentary question¹¹ on a school play in Spain inciting

⁵ Dr. Mirjam Schnieder, "Palestine Country Report," *Preparatory Action 'Culture in the EU's External Relations,'* 2013-2014: http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/policy/international-cooperation/documents/country-reports/palestine_en.pdf

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ European Commission, "Calls for Proposals and Tenders," September 30, 2016:

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-service-)

[servic-](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-service-)

[vic-](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-service-)

[es/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=RS&aofr=136821&userlanguage=en](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-service-)

¹⁰ European Commission, "Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council," June 8, 2016:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0029&from=EN>

¹¹ European Parliament, "Parliamentary questions," April 5, 2017:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2016-009597&language=EN>

violence against "non-Catalan Spaniards," the EU reiterated that "EU legislation¹² ...on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, **obliges Member States to criminalise public incitement to violence and hatred**,¹³ when directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin."¹⁴

As shown in the following examples, many overseas activities that are funded by the EU and member states violate both the EU strategy and EU domestic legislation.

EUROPEAN FUNDED PALESTINIAN CULTURAL NGOS

The Palestinian Performing Arts Network (PPAN)

The Palestinian Performing Arts Network (PPAN), a platform of 11 Palestinian arts NGOs, was founded in 2015, most likely on the basis of an EU grant of €965,970 (2014-2016) to these same organizations for "Performing Arts: A Pathway Towards Self Expression and Democracy."¹⁵ The Freedom Theater, Popular Art Center,¹⁶ Yes Theater, Al-Harah Theater, The Palestine Circus School, The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, The Magnificat Institute, Al Kamandjati Association, Theatre Day Productions, El Funoun Dance Troupe, and Ashtar Theatre comprise PPAN and together implemented the initial EU funded project.

Before becoming independent, PPAN was a joint cultural program in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Culture. The program claimed to "contribute towards the development of a democratic and pluralistic society that respects human rights and enhances Palestinian national identity."¹⁷

PPAN is also funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida),¹⁸ which partnered with PPAN in 2016 and pledged €4.8 million in support for 2016-2020.¹⁹ By 2016, Sida had already transferred €1.3 million to PPAN. In 2016, the Swiss Agency for

¹² Decision 2008/913/JHA.

¹³ European Parliament, "Parliamentary questions," April 5, 2017:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2016-009597&language=EN>

¹⁴ This question referred to a teacher who "was turning the children into an instrument of incitement to hatred and violence against non-Catalan Spaniards" through a school play in which children "were shouting with happiness as they heard phrases like 'kill everyone' or 'destroy the Spanish army.'"

¹⁵ "The EU Cultural Programme 2014,"

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/westbank/documents/news/2013/20140130_culturetable_en.pdf

¹⁶ NGO Monitor, "Popular Art Centre (PAC)," August 20, 2017: <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/ngos/popular-art-centre-pac/>

¹⁷ AM Qattan Foundation, "Palestinian Performing Arts Network," <http://qattanfoundation.org/en/qattan-9>

¹⁸ NGO Monitor, "Sweden," January 11, 2018: <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/funder/sweden/>

¹⁹ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, "Support to Palestinian Performing Arts Network (PPAN) – Support to Performing Arts Network,"

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=5ffbc5bb10&view=att&th=162cdf4f02c58df0&attid=0.1&disp=inline&realattid=f_jg2332bt0&safe=1&zw

Development and Cooperation provided PPAN with \$10,000.²⁰

PPAN and its members have published several statements on PPAN's website, including a condemnation of "the Academy awards for giving a platform for the Israeli government," seeing it "as an extension to its [Academy awards] overt discrimination against black artists and their deep-rooted exclusion from the Academy and wider discrimination in society."²¹ Similarly, PPAN called for a cultural and academic boycott of Israel and refused to participate in the Med Culture regional conference that took place in Morocco due to the participation of an Israeli delegation. For the organization, its participation would be "a clear violation of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign."²²

In December 2017, following President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, PPAN released a statement calling on "the Palestinian Liberation Organization to cancel Oslo Accords, end all forms of contact with the Israeli occupation, and cut off all Palestinian relations with the US administration..."²³ PPAN further called "on Arab and Islamic states to continue pressuring their respective governments to end all forms of cooperation and normalization with the Israeli occupation and the US administration..."

In June 2017, PPAN condemned Norway and Denmark for freezing funding to a Palestinian NGO that had participated in the inauguration of a youth center named after the terrorist Dalal Mughrabi, who in 1978 murdered 38 civilians, including 13 children.²⁴ According to PPAN, "This decision to halt Palestinian NGO funding will have an immediate and adverse effect on...the principle of resisting occupation...the decision by your governments [Norway and Denmark] to halt funding to Palestinian NGOs is part of the far-right Israeli government's policy of combating the principle of right to resistance and weakening the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement."²⁵ PPAN furthered that "Norway's recent funding stance towards a women's center in Burqa Village de-legitimizes and criminalizes the lawful right of Palestinians to resist occupation and is a provocative shift towards conditional funding."²⁶

In 2015, PPAN referred to the wave of terror against Israelis as a "political uprising" and

²⁰ Sweden, "Development and Cooperation," <https://www.eda.admin.ch/sdc>; https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/-pkp4SbM7Oro/Wa0I_b5esl/AAAAAAAAAyM/-EQw2WTO6psPwfZN6lt72ukTjydFuXXdgCL0BGAYYCw/h223/Swiss%2BPFA.JPG

²¹ Palestinian Performing Arts Network, "PPAN Statements," <http://www.ppan.ps/publications/ppan-statements->; Palestinian Performing Arts Network, <http://www.ppan.ps/ppan-statement-apartheidoscars>

²² Al Kamandjati, "Statement by Palestinian performing art organizations 17th July 2014,"

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170204173653/http://www.alkamandjati.com/en/news/302-statement-by-palestinian-performing-art-organizations-17th-july-2014.html>

²³ Palestinian Performing Arts Network, "Statement by the Palestinian Performing Arts Network on Trump's Decision Concerning Jerusalem," December 13, 2017:

<https://www.facebook.com/ThePalestinianCircusSchool/photos/pcb.1489761187758927/1489759854425727/?type=3&theater>

²⁴ Palestinian Performing Arts Network, "Statement by the Palestinian Performing Arts Network," June 6, 2017:

http://www.ppan.ps/data/ppan_statement_on_freeze_of_funding.pdf; NGO Monitor, "Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC)," October 30, 2017: <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/ngos/womens-affairs-technical-committee-watc/>; TOI Staff, "Norway demands PA return funds from women's center named after terrorist," Times of Israel, May 27, 2017: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/norway-demands-pa-return-funds-for-womens-center-named-after-terrorist/>

²⁵ Palestinian Performing Arts Network, "Statement by the Palestinian Performing Arts Network," June 6, 2017: http://www.ppan.ps/data/ppan_statement_on_freeze_of_funding.pdf

²⁶ Ibid.

declared in a statement that “the occupying Israeli military and armed Israeli settlers have deliberately killed and targeted innocent children and youth, burned farming lands, homes, mosques and churches, and have instituted policies of attacking and dividing Palestinian Holy sites.²⁷ These premeditated policies of provocations, collective punishment and deep rooted racism against the Palestinian people requires now more than ever a voice of support, courage and humanity to be heard in Palestine and across the world.”

The above statement also links to videos that PPAN claims depict “the Israeli aggression and blatant racism against the Palestinian people.”²⁸ One video, published by the Palestinian Ministry of Information’s YouTube account, claims to describe the brutality of Israeli patrol officers who “had brutally beaten the Jerusalemite boy [Ahmed Manasrah] after deliberately running over him.”²⁹ In fact, Manasrah had “stabbed and wounded two Israelis” before he was wounded by being hit “by a car when passersby began chasing the two Palestinians.”³⁰ Manasrah was charged by an Israeli court “with attempted murder.”³¹

The Freedom Theater (TFT)

The Freedom Theater (TFT), a member of PPAN, claims to “use theatre and art to address the chronic fear, depression and trauma experienced by children in Jenin Refugee Camp.”³² It also declares that “through cultural resistance, the Freedom Theatre aims to raise a new generation that is able to challenge all forms of oppression.”³³

TFT’s co-founder Zakaria Zubeidi was a former commander of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs brigade.³⁴ Al-Aqsa Martyrs brigade is a terrorist organization designated as such by the EU and the US, among others.³⁵ In a 2016 television interview he declared, “I didn’t abandon [his weapon] but there is

²⁷ Palestinian Performing Arts Network, “PPAN Statements,” <http://www.ppan.ps/publications/ppan-statements-;> Palestinian Performing Arts Network, “Statement by the Palestinian Performing Arts Network,” <http://www.ppan.ps/longest-occupation->

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ministry of Information Palestine, “Ahmad Manasra...Israeli brutality exposed,” October 13, 2015: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3535PnzqnE&oref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DJ3535PnzqnE&has_verified=1

³⁰ Nir Hasson, “Thirteen Year Old Terrorist Charged with Attempted Murder,” *Haaretz*, October 30, 2015: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-thirteen-year-old-terrorist-charged-with-attempted-murder-1.5415392>; Nir Hasson and Barak Ravid, “Israel Releases Photos of Hospitalized Palestinian Boy Abbas Claimed Was Executed,” *Haaretz*, October 15, 2015: <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-israel-releases-photos-of-palestinian-boy-abbas-claimed-was-executed-1.5409525>

³¹ Nir Hasson, “Thirteen Year Old Terrorist Charged with Attempted Murder,” *Haaretz*, October 30, 2015: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-thirteen-year-old-terrorist-charged-with-attempted-murder-1.5415392>

³² The Freedom Theatre, “Our Legacy,” <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/who-we-are/our-legacy/>

³³ The Freedom Theatre, “Organisational overview, Annual Report 2016, Summary of activities 2017, Programme Plan 2018,” June 16, 2017: https://issuu.com/freedomtheatrejenin/docs/annual_report_2016_final

³⁴ The Freedom Theatre, “Zakaria Zubeidi freed of all charges,” <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/news/zakaria-zubeidi-freed-of-charges/>; Avi Issacharoff, “Palestinian Authority Arrests Former Militant Zakaria Zubeidi,” *Haaretz*, May 5, 2012: <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5219694>

³⁵ Official Journal of the European Union, “List of Persons, Groups and Entities Referred to in Article 1,” January 28, 2017: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D0154&from=EN#page=3>; US Department of State, “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

politics now, [his weapon] is under the roof [of politics]."³⁶ In 2016, Mustafa Sheta, a TFT "senior staff member," was "denied exit by Israeli border authorities to attend a visa appointment at the US Embassy in Amman."³⁷ He was also convicted of membership in the PFLP terrorist organization.³⁸ Likewise, a TFT "student" was "denied entry by Jordanian border authorities to participate in community theatre performances in refugee camps."³⁹ In 2011, during an event taking place during "Culture is Resistance! Week," a TFT member declared "We [Palestinians] believe in all forms of resistance. A kid throwing a stone. We believe in him. A man with a gun. We believe in him. Man with pen and paper. We believe in him. For seven years I was a fighter with a gun. Now I am a fighter on stage."⁴⁰

The Freedom Theater's (TFT) motto "generating cultural resistance" is defined as "not a substitute for any other form of resistance; It is a complement. Various forms of resistance can be described as a large mosaic where each stone represents a different form. Cultural resistance is one of the stones- but not just any stone: It is the stone that gives the entire mosaic a pattern, meaning and direction."⁴¹ In 2016, TFT together with PAPAN, Yes Theater, The Palestine Circus School, and Al Kamandjati Association – all of which are recipients of EU funding – marked "10 years of cultural resistance" and organized a theatre festival and forum, which focused on "the concept of cultural resistance."⁴²

TFT's "most successful production to date, *The Siege*," includes dimensions that can be described as sympathetic to the terrorist narrative. The plot "is based on the 2002 events in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem," which depicts "a group of armed men seek[ing] sanctuary in one of the world's holiest sites as the Israeli army closes in with helicopters, tanks and snipers."⁴³ In reality, the so-called "fighters" seeking "sanctuary" were Palestinian terrorists who had launched attacks against Israeli civilians. Thirteen of the terrorists, members of the Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades terrorist organizations, were responsible for the murder of at least 20 Israeli civilians, including in two March 2002 suicide bombings that killed 13 Israeli civilians in Jerusalem.⁴⁴ They were later expelled to several EU countries (Ireland, Greece, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Portugal), following an agreement brokered with EU participation.⁴⁵

³⁶ Ohad Hemo, "After prison, Zubeidi goes into politics," Mako, December 7, 2016: https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/security-q4_2016/Article-1e7d294e278d851004.htm

³⁷ The Freedom Theatre, "Senior staff member and student prohibited from travelling abroad," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/news/senior-staff-member-and-student-prohibited-from-travelling-abroad/>

³⁸ PFLP, "Progressive Labor Union Action Front demands immediate release of Khalida Jarrar," April 5, 2015: <http://pflp.ps/english/2015/04/05/progressive-labor-union-action-front-demands-immediate-release-of-khalida-jarrar/>

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ The Advocacy Project, "Palestinian Theatre as Resistance," July 19, 2011: <http://www.advocacynet.org/palestinian-theatre-as-resistance/>

⁴¹ The Freedom Theatre, "Organisational overview, Annual Report 2016, Summary of activities 2017, Programme Plan 2018," June 16, 2017: https://issuu.com/freedomtheatrejenin/docs/annual_report_2016_final

⁴² The Freedom Theatre, "TFT10," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/tft10/>

⁴³ The Freedom Theatre, "Annual Report 2016," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/annual-report-2016/>; The Freedom Theatre, "The Siege," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/productions-productions/the-siege/>

⁴⁴ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "13 Palestinian terrorists from the Church of the Nativity to be deported," May 20, 2002: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA-Archive/2002/Pages/13%20Palestinian%20terrorists%20from%20the%20Church%20of%20the%20N.aspx>

⁴⁵ Elhanan Miller, "Bethlehem's Christians put a patriotic spin on a traumatic siege," Times of Israel, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/bethlehems-christians-put-a-patriotic-spin-on-a-traumatic-siege/>; Suzanne Goldenberg,

TFT argues that it presents the play in a cultural manner "in which fighters are seen not only as idealized symbols of resistance or demonized symbols of terrorism, but as individuals, Muslim and Christian, who under extreme circumstances take actions that will have far-reaching consequences for themselves and in the wider socio-political context." TFT further highlights that "the play also delves into issues about the possibility of **morality in warfare and the consequences of lengthy oppression through military occupation**, as each fighter reflects upon his relationship to Palestine and to the struggle" (emphasis added).⁴⁶

According to TFT, "The Siege 2015 performances were supported by the EU, the British Council."⁴⁷ Similarly, THT notes that "*The Siege* 2016 and 2017 West Bank performances are supported by Sida [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency]."⁴⁸

In 2016, TFT produced and performed the play "Images from the life of Ghassan Kanafani" based on the writings of Ghassan Kanafani, who is described by TFT as an "iconic figure in the Palestinian struggle for liberation," and "a prominent member of PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine)," a terrorist organization designated as such by the EU, among other countries. The play was "supported by Sida, as part of the Palestinian Performing Arts Network, and by the EU."⁴⁹

In 2013, TFT produced and performed the play "Suicide Note from Palestine."⁵⁰ The play depicts the nightmare of a girl who is meant to embody "Palestine," and "announces her decision to die as a political act" in a "UN general meeting." During her nightmare, "Palestine, is forced to interact with all the external stakeholders that play a fundamental role in the current situation. The violent Israeli army, Israel as an occupying power, an agreeable Europe, a paternalistic United States and the hypocritical and self-absorbed Arab world, along with a **United Nations medical team in charge of drugging Palestine during her uprisings**" (emphasis added). The play was also "supported by Sida, as part of the PPA program, and by the European Union."

Al-Harah Theater

One of the recipients of a 2015 EU "Cultural Diplomacy" grant (€200,000 from 2015-2017), Al-Harah Theater, a member of PPA, claims to be "committed to principles of plurality and multiculturalism..."⁵¹ However the organization produces highly politicized plays, including:

"Deal to end church siege as Israel lines up new strike," *The Guardian*, May 10, 2002: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/10/israel2>

⁴⁶ The Freedom Theatre, "The Siege," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/productions-productions/the-siege/>

⁴⁷ The Freedom Theatre, "The Siege 2015-2016," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/productions/the-siege-2015-16/>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ The Freedom Theatre, "New play: Images from the life of Ghassan Kanafani," <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/news/new-play-images-from-the-life-of-ghassan-kanafani/>

⁵⁰ The Freedom Theatre, "Suicide Note from Palestine," 2014: <http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/suicide-note-from-palestine-2014/>

⁵¹ EEAS, "Cultural Diplomacy 2015-2016,"

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/westbank/documents/news/160115-cultural-diplomacy-2015-2016_en.pdf

- The Trap⁵²: a play that "demonstrates a model of Israeli intelligence operations to turn Palestinian children into collaborators who betray their people, contradicting all human values, international laws and conventions."⁵³ The play was produced in cooperation with Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCI-P), a Palestinian NGO with reported links to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist organization.⁵⁴ The play was produced "within the project of protecting children, victims of armed conflicts, which is funded by the European Union" and while Al-Harah Theater was benefiting from an EU "Cultural Diplomacy" grant designated for promoting "EU core values."⁵⁵
- Hazbara: a "satirical black comedy," "which explores the Israeli propaganda machine." The play "highlights the Israeli attempts and involvement in the Cultural theft and appropriation towards the Arab and Palestinian Heritage."⁵⁶

Yes Theatre

Yes Theatre, a member of PAPAN, claims that "it believes that theatre and drama can positively influence the children and youth to create a change in their society. Therefore, it works to inspire Palestinian children and youth in general and those in Hebron in particular to try out and to develop creative and constructive reactions to the challenges in their daily lives."⁵⁷ Yes Theatre also claims to implement "a psychological program with Palestinian minors based on drama therapy and theatre. The program aims at improving minor's (sic) mental health situation, returning them to schools and re-integrating them within the Palestinian society."⁵⁸

Raed Shiokhi, a member of the Yes Theater, declared that he was "active during the First Intifada" and that "after losing two of his best friends in the conflict, Raed considered becoming a suicide bomber."⁵⁹ Shiokhi adopted the concept of "cultural resistance" and declared "we cannot say instead of the gun. It is beside the gun. We can show people an alternative form of resistance, but we are not here to tell them which forms of resistance to choose."

In May 2017, Yes Theater hosted a play that "tells the story of Palestinian Ali Taha, who became a

⁵² Al-Harah Theater, "The Trap," http://www.alharah.org/en/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=38:the-trap&Itemid=250

⁵³ East Jerusalem YMCA, "The International Day in Support of Victims of Torture," http://www.ej-ymca.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=143%3Athe-international-day-in-support-of-victims-of-torture-&catid=3%3Anewsflash&Itemid=1

⁵⁴ NGO Monitor, "Defense for Children International – Palestine," October 30, 2017: https://www.ngo-monitor.org/ngos/defence_for_children_international_palestine_section/; NGO Monitor, "The European-Funded NGO PFLP Network," November 15, 2016: <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/reports/european-funded-ngo-pflp-network/>

⁵⁵ EEAS, "Cultural Diplomacy 2015-2016," http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/westbank/documents/news/160115-cultural-diplomacy-2015-2016_en.pdf

⁵⁶ Al-Harah Theater, "Hazaba Play," http://www.alharah.org/en/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=98:hazbara&Itemid=250

⁵⁷ Yes Theatre, "About Us," <http://www.yestheatre.org/eng/index.php/en/homepage/about>

⁵⁸ Action of Christians against Torture, French – Palestine Solidarity Association, French Platform of NGOs for Palestine, French Human Rights League, Yes Theatre, "Broken Childhood: Palestinian minors in the fire line of Israeli repression," March 2016:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/ISR/INT_CAT_NGO_ISR_23470_E.pdf#page=2

⁵⁹ The Advocacy Project, "Palestinian Theatre as Resistance," July 19, 2011: <http://www.advocacy.net.org/palestinian-theatre-as-resistance/>

martyr in 1972 at the Lod airport following the hijacking of a Belgian Sabena plane that was supposed to take off in the direction of the Lod airport in Palestine, to liberate 100 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.⁶⁰ The martyr Ali Taha carried out the attack together with three members of the 'Black September' organization, an attack that ended in his death and the death of his friend Abdel Raouf al-Atrash, and the arrest of Theresa Halsa and Rima Tannous who participated in the attack" (NGO Monitor translation).

Yes Theatre does not publish a list of donors but includes a number of partners on its website.⁶¹ These include Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Diakonia (Sweden).

Al Kamandjati

Al Kamandjati (AK), a member of PPAN, claims "to support the education and schooling of Palestinian children by making music more accessible to them, especially those living in refugee camps and villages throughout Palestine and Lebanon."⁶² In parallel, AK considers that "the Palestinian resistance must operate on all levels."

In 2017, AK participated in an event in Hebron "in honor of the martyr (who is also an intellectual), Basel al-A'araj and all the martyrs" (NGO Monitor translation) who was killed in 2017 in a firefight with the IDF.⁶³ Prior to his death, he was arrested by the Palestinian Authority in April 2016 "for planning attacks against Israelis and imprisoned for six months."⁶⁴ According to Israeli officials, al-A'araj "was allegedly part of a terrorist cell planning to carry out attacks on Israeli targets," and he "directed the cell and was responsible for purchasing the weaponry."

Ramzi Aburedwan, the founder and the director of Al Kamandjati, "had worked closely with the Barenboim-Said foundation," within the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra – a workshop for Israeli, Palestinian, and Arab musicians.⁶⁵ Tensions arose between Aburedwan and Barenboim due to Barenboim's lack of support for a cultural boycott of Israeli institutions. Following a request by Aburedwan to the Israeli-Arab Orchestra to adopt a statement condemning the occupation, Mariam Said, the co-President of the Barenboim-Said Foundation addressed Aburedwan and declared, "but the project is not political, Ramzi. It is educational. Either we are about music or we are political."⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Yes Theatre, "Watch Zik Finn Ya Ali," May 20, 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1057282927737583/>

⁶¹ Yes Theatre, "Partners," <http://yestheatre.org/eng/index.php/en/homepage/partners>

⁶² Al Kamansajati, "The Violinist,"

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=5ffbc5bb10&view=att&th=162ce5f38434ac18&attid=0.1&disp=inline&realattid=f_jg2796n90&safe=1&zw

⁶³ Zamnpress, "Born on the Land of Hebron," March 21, 2017: <https://zamnpress.com/news/111445>

⁶⁴ Judah Ari Gross, "Palestinian suspect killed in gunfight with IDF troops in West Bank," March 6, 2017: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-suspect-killed-in-gunfight-with-idf-troops-in-west-bank/>

⁶⁵ Sandy Tolan, *Children of the Stone: The Power of Music in a Hard Land*, Bloomsbury: NY, 2015:

<https://books.google.co.il/books?id=7EZOBQAAQBAJ&pg=PA257&lpg=PA257&dq=al+kamandjati+resistance&source=bl&ots=NwAkb70h7J&sig=SspNMjw122cD26yvVKCS4KJESwA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewicj4WKt5rWAhXBthQKHys2An8Q6AEISTAG#v=onepage&q=al%20kamandjati%20resistance&f=false>

⁶⁶ Barenboim-Said, "About," <https://www.barenboim-said.ps/vision>; ⁶⁶ Sandy Tolan, *Children of the Stone: The Power of Music in a Hard Land*, Bloomsbury: NY, 2015:

<https://books.google.co.il/books?id=7EZOBQAAQBAJ&pg=PA257&lpg=PA257&dq=al+kamandjati+resistance&source=bl&ots=NwAkb70h7J&sig=SspNMjw122cD26yvVKCS4KJESwA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewicj4WKt5rWAhXBthQKHys2An8Q6AEISTAG#v=onepage&q=al%20kamandjati%20resistance&f=false>

AK was also one of the recipients in 2015 of an EU "Cultural Diplomacy" grant (€200,000, 2015-2017).⁶⁷

Palestine Circus School (PCS)

PPAN member organization Palestine Circus School (PCS) claims it "dreams of a free Palestine in which Palestinians engage in a dynamic cultural and artistic life that embraces creativity, freedom of expression and diversity as the main pillars for a just and inclusive society."⁶⁸ On December 16, 2017, in the context of the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the US administration, PCS announced that its scheduled event would be postponed "in solidarity with Jerusalem and out of **respect for all martyrs**" (emphasis added).⁶⁹ A PCS "trainer and performer," Abu Saha, was arrested in 2015 by the Israeli security services.⁷⁰ According to Israel, Saha "is a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and constitutes a security risk that could not be addressed any other way other than through administrative detention."⁷¹

Edward Said National Conservatory of Music

Another PPAN member, Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, claims that its mission is "teaching and promoting music to all Palestinians wherever they are within the framework of strengthening the cultural and national identity."⁷² Deputy General Director for Programs and Concerts Mohammad Maragha believes that "Fascism = Zionism," and that the only way for a Palestinian state is through violence, "Let the weapon be tomorrow" (NGO Monitor translation).⁷³

Burj Luq-Luq Social Center Society

According to Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), an NGO that reports on incitement, "[in 2012] the Burj Luq-Luq Social Center Society organization performed a puppet show for children in East Jerusalem to promote non-smoking. The educational message delivered by the puppets instructed children to **replace cigarettes with machine guns**." The play further states that "I wanted to stand before the audience and sing to Jerusalem, which is being kept from us."

rce=bl&ots=NwAk70h7J&sig=SspNMjw122cD26yvVKCS4KJEsWA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0OahUKEwicj4WKt5rWAhXBthQKHYS2An8Q6AEISTAG#v=onepage&q=al%20kamandjati%20resistance&f=false

⁶⁷ EEAS, "Cultural Diplomacy 2015-2016,"

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/westbank/documents/news/160115-cultural-diplomacy-2015-2016_en.pdf

⁶⁸ Palestine Circus School, "Vision and Mission," <https://www.palcircus.ps/en/content/vision-and-mission>

⁶⁹ The Palestine Circus School, "Dear friends, in solidarity with Jerusalem and out of respect for all martyrs, today's event is postponed," December 16, 2017:

<https://www.facebook.com/ThePalestinianCircusSchool/posts/1492530244148688>

⁷⁰ Palestine Circus School, "Annual Report: 2015-2016," http://www.palcircus.ps/sites/default/files/year-report/annual_report_-_final.pdf#page=3

⁷¹ Noa Shpigel and Jack Khoury, "Israel Holding Palestinian Circus Performer in Detention Without Trial for Months," *Haaretz*, March 2, 2016: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-protests-over-jailed-palestinian-circus-performer-gain-momentum-1.5412223>

⁷² The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, "Our Approach," <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/en/our-approach>

⁷³ The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, "Administrative Board," <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/en/administrative-board>; Mohammad Margaha, "Trailer: '5 Broken Cameras,'" January 30, 2012:

<https://www.facebook.com/mohammad.maragha.78/posts/183280305104753>; Mohammad Maragha, "Let the weapon shine," October 17, 2011: <https://www.facebook.com/mohammad.maragha.78/posts/302001483147892>

Jerusalem, whose youth are being killed by the Jews, to sing and to say: Jerusalem, we are coming, Jerusalem, **the time of death has arrived**. Jerusalem, we will not surrender to the enemies or be humiliated" (emphasis added).⁷⁴

According to PMW, Burj Luq-Luq hosted a 2014 soccer tournament named for PLO terrorist Abu Jihad and organized a tournament named for Ibrahim Al-Akari, who murdered two Israeli civilians in a November 2014 attack in Jerusalem.⁷⁵

From 2015 to 2017, Burj Luq-Luq, in cooperation with CISP – International Committee for the Development of Peoples, received €855,000 from the EU for a project "We're the change."⁷⁶ The project includes "sport recreational activities, as football and basketball yearly courses managed by a professional sport coach."

In 2016, Burj Luq-Luq received funding from the British Consulate General Jerusalem, the French Consulate General, and the Swedish Consulate in Jerusalem.⁷⁷

Popular Art Center

Popular Art Center (PAC) engages in political warfare against Israel by organizing various cultural events.⁷⁸ For instance, PAC was one of the organizers of an April 2017 children's festival on the topic of "the 30 year Palestinian uprising."⁷⁹ One dance routine publicized by PAC was titled "Songs of the Intifada." Another was captioned "Brother, point the gun" (NGO Monitor translation).⁸⁰

In February 2016, PAC organized a ceremony in honor of "Palestinian martyrs" whose homes were demolished, featuring the "father of the martyr Baha Eleyan" as a speaker (NGO Monitor translation).⁸¹ Eleyan was one of two terrorists to board a bus in Jerusalem in October 2015

⁷⁴ Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, "Puppet show at UN-supported Palestinian NGO: Replace cigarettes with machine guns," PMW, June 11, 2012: http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=6930

⁷⁵ Itamar Marcus, "Vatican-funded sports club sponsors tournament named after mass murderer," May 2, 2016: http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=17839; Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, "UN-and EU-funded Al-Quds University honors murderer," November 13, 2014: http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=13046

⁷⁶ Burj Luq Luq Social Centre, "We're The Change," <http://www.burjalluquq.org/home/were-the-change/>

⁷⁷ Burj Luq Luq Social Centre, "2016," <http://www.burjalluquq.org/home/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/annual-internet-file.pdf#page=137>

⁷⁸ NGO Monitor, "Popular Art Centre (PAC)," August 20, 2017: <https://www.ngo-monitor.org/ngos/popular-art-centre-pac/>

⁷⁹ Popular Art Centre,

https://www.popularartcentre.org/index.php?page=section&pid=85§ion_parent=0&catid=6

⁸⁰ Popular Art Centre,

<https://www.facebook.com/PopularArtCentre/videos/vb.172740302808854/1292493900833483/?type=2&theater;>

Popular Art Centre, "<https://www.facebook.com/PopularArtCentre/videos/1292618780820995/>

⁸¹ Popular Art Centre, February 6, 2016:

<https://www.facebook.com/PopularArtCentre/photos/a.182194175196800.44630.172740302808854/937370183012525/?type=3&theater;> Popular Art Centre, February 6, 2016:

<https://www.facebook.com/PopularArtCentre/photos/a.182194175196800.44630.172740302808854/937555622993981/?type=3&theater>

armed with a gun and a knife, murdering three and injuring seven.⁸² The same ceremony featured a musical performance captioned "no to laying down guns" (NGO Monitor translation).⁸³

PAC was one of the recipients in 2015 of an EU "Cultural Diplomacy" grant (€200,000, 2015-2017).⁸⁴ As a member of PPA, it was also one of the recipients of the 2015 EU grant "Performing Arts: A Pathway Towards Self Expression and Democracy."⁸⁵ PAC has partnered with and is funded by Solidarité Socialiste, a Belgian organization that receives funding from the Belgian government.⁸⁶ In its 2014 annual report (latest available), PAC reports receiving funding for projects and festivals from the European Union, Sweden (Sida), France (the French Consulate), and Spain (Spanish Consulate General in Jerusalem).⁸⁷

CONCLUSION

Common to all of the examples presented in this report is the exploitation of cultural activities and indoctrination for rejectionist, illiberal, and often violent agendas – all with the support of European government funds and in violation of European values and norms.

This issue has not gone unnoticed within the EU, as shown in a report commissioned by the EC in 2013 that urged EU officials and decision-makers to "**not lose sight of the fact** that European activities in Palestine [in the culture and art domains] take place in a context that is **not entirely in line with European values**" (emphases added).

Similar concerns were also raised with the Commission by a number of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In July 2017, MEPs Marijana Petir (EPP), Fulvio Martusciello (EPP), Lars Adaktusson (EPP), Patricija Šulin (EPP), and Bas Belder (ECR) submitted a parliamentary question on PAC, asking whether "an organisation that honours terrorists" can be trusted to "increase public awareness of EU core values."⁸⁸ In September 2017, MEP Frédérique Ries (ALDE) submitted a parliamentary question on Burj Luq-Luq, asking whether the Commission intends to "review the selection process for grantees of the East Jerusalem Programme to prevent NGOs

⁸² Nir Hasson, "The homes of two East Jerusalem terrorists who carried out attacks in the city were demolished," January 1, 2016: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/1.2813892>

⁸³ Popular Art Centre, <https://www.facebook.com/PopularArtCentre/videos/937589189657291/>

⁸⁴ EEAS, "Cultural Diplomacy 2015-2016,"

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/westbank/documents/news/160115-cultural-diplomacy-2015-2016_en.pdf

⁸⁵ EEAS, "The EU Cultural Programme 2014,"

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/westbank/documents/news/2013/20140130_culturetable_en.pdf

⁸⁶ Solidarité Socialiste, "Palestine," <http://www.solsoc.be/+Palestine,14-+>

⁸⁷ Popular Art Centre, 2014:

https://www.popularartcentre.org/data_site_files/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1%202014.pdf;

⁸⁸ European Parliament, "Parliamentary Questions," July 11, 2011:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2017-004656&language=EN>

that promote incitement from being funded."⁸⁹

In both cases the EU's response was evasive and failed to address the core issue.

In response to the question on PAC, the Commission stated that "From the information collected by our services, the ceremony was not seen by the Palestinians as 'honouring martyrs' but, rather, as a one-off 'fund-raising' event to collect funds for the family of Baha Olayyan and other families whose houses had been demolished by Israel." The answer simply ignores and erases the fact, highlighted in the question, that the same ceremony featured a musical performance captioned "no to laying down guns."

The Commission's response to the question on Burj Luq-Luq simply states that "EU-financed activities of the community center are considered to be in compliance with EU human rights rules and standards and in conformity with applicable EU financial rules."⁹⁰

Highlighting the irony of both cases, the answer further stressed that "The EU uses all possible means to ensure that an organization benefiting from EU funds **is not the source of public incitement to hatred or to violence. In such cases, the EU would immediately react**" (emphasis added).

In light of the fact that EU institutions have been alerted multiple times to the extremist agendas and activities of some grantees, continued funding amounts to irresponsible negligence, in violation of European core values and policy commitments to peace and a negotiated two-state framework.

⁸⁹ European Parliament, "Parliamentary Questions," September 21, 2017:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2017-005868+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en>

⁹⁰ European Parliament, "Parliamentary Questions," December 1, 2017:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2017-005868&language=EN>