



Finnish Funding to Civil Society in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

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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 agendas.

Introduction

- [Finland](#) funds numerous Israeli, Palestinian, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Finnish Embassy in Tel Aviv, the [Representative office of Finland in Ramallah](#), and indirectly through the United Nations and [Finn Church Aid \(FCA\)](#).
- In 2021-2024, Finland committed [€28 million](#) in “development cooperation for Palestine.” This includes [€14 million to NGOs](#) via projects categorized as “Strengthening resilience” and “Civil Society.”
- Many of the NGOs receiving Finnish funding promote anti-Israel narratives, lawfare, and discriminatory BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) campaigns

Lack of Transparency

- The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs [states](#) that its aid for the “Occupied Palestinian Territory covers the region, with a particular focus on Area C, East Jerusalem (West Bank), and Gaza.”
- However, the Ministry fails to disclose the specific funding amounts or identify the NGO recipients, raising concerns about transparency and accountability in its allocations.

Direct Finnish Funding

[Independent Commission of Human Rights \(ICHR\)](#)

- In 2024-2025, the [Independent Commission of Human Rights \(ICHR\)](#) received [€800,000](#).
- While purporting to be an National Human Rights Institution ([NHRI](#)) that monitors PA compliance with human rights standards, the ICHR also serves as a vehicle to produce and promote PLO political propaganda.
- ICHR regularly collaborates with and has demonstrated its support for [EU](#), [US](#), [Canada](#) and [Israel](#)-designated terror groups, such as Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).
- In October 2023, ICHR [sent a letter](#) to UN officials, claiming, “Since October 7, 2023, when Palestinian factions in Gaza launched the ‘Al-Aqsa Storm’ operation targeting settlements near Gaza...The root causes of Israel’s actions and crimes against Palestinians stem from its discriminatory policies based on the Apartheid.”

[Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling \(WCLAC\)](#)

- In 2024, WCLAC received [€60,000](#) from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- In February 2024, WCLAC was a signatory on a [letter](#) to UN Secretary-General António Guterres accusing the UN Office on Genocide Prevention of “Inexcusable Failure to Address Israel’s Ongoing Genocide in Gaza.”

Palestinian Vision (PalVision, or “Ruya”)

- In 2024, PalVision received [€60,000](#) from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- Many of PalVision’s board members, officials, and employees have [justified and glorified violence against Israeli civilians and praised individual terrorists and terrorist attacks](#).

East Jerusalem YMCA (EJ-YMCA)

- In 2024, East Jerusalem YMCA received [€170,000](#) from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- In October 2023, in the aftermath of the brutal Hamas attack on October 7, EJ-YMCA was a signatory on a [statement](#) claiming, “we categorically reject the myopic and distorted Christian responses that ignore the wider context and the root causes of this war: Israel’s systemic oppression of the Palestinians over the last 75 years since the Nakba, the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestine, and the oppressive and racist military occupation that constitutes the crime of apartheid.”

Funding to Israeli NGOs

Gisha

- In 2021-2024, [Gisha](#) received NIS 306,820 from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (based on Financial Reports Submitted to the Israeli Registrar of Nonprofits).
- In October 2023, Gisha Executive Director Tania Hary [tweeted](#), “Today many asked me a version of the question ‘how much longer do they have?’ in reference to the siege. Do they mean how long until they starve to death? I can’t say. Maybe ask Israeli officials how many people in Gaza have to die before the thirst for vengeance is quenched.”
- In May 2023, Gisha was a [signatory on a statement](#) blaming Israel for the death of Khader Adnan following his 86-day-long hunger strike and [refusal to receive medical treatment](#) from the Israeli Prisons Service. According to the statement, “Israel’s unjust system of arrests and detention are part and parcel of the policies used by Israel to maintain its occupation and apartheid regime.”
 - The statement ignored that Adnan was a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad member arrested in February 2023 and was [indicted for membership in a terror group, supporting a terrorist organization, and incitement](#).

Funding to International NGOs

International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)

- In 2025, FIDH received [€1,034,100](#) from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- FIDH Vice President Alexis Deswaef is also an Administrator of Al-Haq Europe. Deswaef refers to PFLP-linked Al-Haq Director Shawan Jabarin as a “[brother](#)” and the “[lion of Ramallah](#).”
- In November 2023, FIDH passed a [resolution](#) headlined, “Israel’s unfolding crime of genocide and other crimes in Gaza and against the Palestinian People.” (Read NGO Monitor’s analysis, “[FIDH Declares Total Political War Against Israel](#).”)
- In October 2023, in the aftermath of the brutal Hamas attack on October 7, FIDH [published a statement](#) claiming, “The cycle of violence is a predictable result of Israel’s illegal occupation and apartheid regime that has lasted too long despite calls and warnings issued by human rights organizations and United Nations mechanisms...FIDH recalls that as long as the international community refuses to address the root causes of the ongoing hostilities, no just and lasting peace will ever be achieved... Israel’s apartheid regime, established and maintained through maintaining a system of inherently discriminatory laws, policies and practices, is premised on the perpetual denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and return.”

SOMO (Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations)

- In [2022-2023](#), SOMO received €27,516 from the Finnish MFA via the [Business and Human Rights Resource Centre](#) and a further €3,564 directly from the MFA.
- SOMO’s approach to Israel reflects a glaring double standard. While presenting itself as a defender of international law and human rights, SOMO singles out Israel for uniquely punitive treatment. Its support for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement is based on highly politicized and contested narratives, rather than a consistent or objective application of legal and moral principles. This selective advocacy undermines SOMO’s credibility and exposes the fundamentally flawed and biased nature of its recommendations.
- In May 2024, SOMO published a [legal briefing](#) “Exploring the legal consequences for states and corporations involved in supplying jet fuel to the Israeli military.” According to SOMO, “States should act to stop the transfer of such supplies to Israel, and an embargo on jet fuel and crude oil is an important means of achieving this.”
- In April 2024, SOMO [published a brief](#) “examin[ing] the legal consequences of this order for companies and third states, with regard to businesses domiciled in their territory and to their own trade and economic relations.” The brief called on third states to “Impose an arms embargo on Israel,” “Impose a fuel embargo on Israel,” “Partially or wholly suspend existing trade or economic association agreements, as well as government-sponsored trade missions with Israel where lawful,” and “Cease procurement from or investment of public funds in Israeli or other firms implicated in Israel’s current military operations in Gaza, plausibly constituting genocide.”

- In March 2024, SOMO was a signatory on a [letter](#) to the European Union officials calling to “suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement without delay, in light of the human rights violations committed by the State of Israel...Human rights abuses by the Israel government did not start in 2023.”

[World Organization Against Torture \(OMCT\)](#)

- In [2025](#), the Finnish MFA granted OMCT [€1,180,000](#).
- In October 2024, OMCT was a [signatory on a statement](#) calling to “Impose an immediate arms embargo on Israel” and “Impose economic, trade, academic and other sanctions on officials who are responsible for, or complicit in serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.”
- On the one-year anniversary of the Oct 7th attacks, [OMCT issued a statement](#) equating Israeli hostages—who were kidnapped, held unlawfully, and denied basic rights—with Palestinian prisoners, many of whom were arrested in combat operations and are held in recognized detention facilities with legal oversight. This comparison distorts the reality of hostage-taking as a war crime versus lawful detention under a judicial framework.
 - OMCT criticized Israel for denying detainees access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) but failed to acknowledge that Hamas has completely barred any access to Israeli hostages, holding them illegally while severely torturing and abusing them. This omission downplays Hamas’ violations and presents a biased narrative.
- In October 2023, Pierre Galand, president of OMCT-Europe, [published an article](#) claiming, “I claim the right -which some want to deny- to raise my voice in support of the martyred Palestinian people and to condemn the Israeli government, army, settlers and religious extremists who, in defiance of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination to simply exist, and ignoring the humanitarian law, are attempting to silence all resistance against the invader.”

[International Commission of Jurists \(ICJ\)](#)

- In [2025](#), ICJ received [€1,140,000](#) from the Finnish MFA.
- In October 2024, ICJ [called](#) on “all States to stop providing military aid to Israel and, instead, use all and any leverage at their disposal to secure a permanent ceasefire.”
- In October 2024, ICJ published a report titled “[A Year of Atrocities: War Crimes in Israel and Gaza](#),” alleging, “there is compelling evidence that certain acts committed in Israel and the Gaza Strip on and since 7 October 2023 amount to serious violations of international humanitarian law (IHL), giving rise to individual criminal liability.” According to ICJ, “a number of States with particular influence over Israel, particularly the United States, continue to provide arms to the Israeli government are already on notice that, by their actions and omissions, they are aiding and abetting the perpetration of war crimes.”

[Access Now](#)

- In [2025](#), Access Now received [€1,180,000](#) from the Finnish MFA.
- Access Now is [active in campaigns](#) against what it calls Meta “censorship” and “[Israel’s Digital Occupation](#).”
- On October 13, 2023, in the aftermath of the brutal Hamas atrocities on October 7, Access Now [claimed](#), “The Israeli government declared war on Sunday, October 8, in response to an assault by Hamas militants beginning Saturday, October 7. These escalations come in the context of Israel’s ongoing 16-year blockade in the occupied territory of Gaza, 56 years of military occupation, and decades of struggle for a just and sustainable peace in the region.”

Indirect Finnish Funding to Palestinian NGOs

Finn Church Aid (FCA)

- Finn Church Aid (FCA) “[is Finland’s largest international aid organization](#).”
- In [2023](#), FCA received [€8 million](#) from the Finnish government. In [2023](#), FCA reported spending €4.8 million on programs in “Middle East.”
 - In [2022](#), FCA reported €4.6 million in its [Middle East budget](#), with €400,000 designated towards the “Palestinian Territories.”
- Finn Church Aid has funded highly politicized and biased NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict including [Sadaka Reut](#), [Rabbis for Human Rights](#), [Zochrot](#), and the [Palestinian Counseling Center](#).
- In the wake of Hamas’s October 7, 2023, massacre—when thousands of terrorists from Gaza brutally murdered 1,200 Israelis, amongst other atrocities—FCA withdrew its volunteers from the West Bank “[due to the worsening security situation](#).”

[Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel \(EAPPI\)](#)

- Finn Church Aid is the “[Finnish participant](#)” of the [World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel](#) (EAPPI), which claims to “provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitor, and report human rights abuses.” Both WCC and EAPPI play key roles in mobilizing [church BDS efforts](#).
 - EAPPI sends volunteers to the West Bank to “[witness life under occupation](#).” Upon completion of the program, the volunteers return to their home countries and churches where many engage in anti-Israel advocacy, including advocating for BDS campaigns in churches, comparing Israel to apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany, and other delegitimization strategies.
- In 2023, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland [contributed €9,000](#) to EAPPI.
- According to [EAPPI Finland](#), “In Finland, the selection and training of observers is the responsibility of the Finnish Church Aid. The Finnish Church Aid is a partner organisation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry finances Finland’s EAPPI activities through programme support from partner organisations.”

- EAPPI participates in activities [commemorating](#) the Palestinian “Nakba” (catastrophe), and during their 3-month tours the program is focused exclusively on the Palestinian narrative.
- In October 2023, EAPPI [claimed](#), “This escalation must be understood in the context of 55 years of Israeli military occupation of Palestinian land and 75 years of dispossession and oppression of the Palestinian people...This major escalation did not happen in a vacuum.”

West Bank Protection Consortium/[Norwegian Refugee Council \(NRC\)](#)

- The West Bank Protection Consortium has received [€2.3 million](#) from Finland since 2019. An additional [€1.7 million](#) is planned for 2025-2027.
- The West Bank Protection Consortium consists of EU Member States and five NGO partners, the [Norwegian Refugee Council \(NRC\)](#), Action Against Hunger (ACF), ACTED, Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC), and Première Urgence Internationale (PUI). Through the Consortium, the partner NGOs lobby to “[transform policies and practices](#)” and to “ensure effective and timely political interventions by the UN and Third States.”
 - In May 2021, Consortium representatives [participated in a hearing in the Irish Parliament](#), calling on the EU to take “concrete actions,” including “deduction of funds from bilateral agreements between, for instance, Ireland and Israel or the EU-Israel Association Agreement” and urged “meaningful consequences and lawful countermeasures pursued by member states.”
 - NRC is the “[lead facilitating agency](#)” of the Consortium.
 - One of NRC’s principle projects within the Consortium is “Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA).”
 - ICLA exploits judicial frameworks to manipulate Israeli policy, bypassing democratic frameworks. Included in [ICLA’s program goals](#) is “supporting the PA both locally and nationally on casework” and [works](#) with “other NRC core competences, West Bank Protection Consortium partners, and UN OCHA, as well as with local authorities and village councils.”
 - As part of the ICLA program, NRC [provides](#) “legal assistance, including paralegal services, accompaniment, follow up or court representation in order to ensure the best possible individual legal protection outcomes” in “collaboration, coordination and partnership both internally within NRC and externally with NGO sector... and with the PA with a view to address some of the barriers to participation of the hard to reach population in ICLA response.”
 - Through its Palestinian and Israeli partner NGOs and private lawyers, the ICLA program submits between 500-800 new cases to Israeli courts per year.

Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM)

- In [2023](#), FELM reported €6.1 million in grants from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- [According to its website](#), FELM operates in international, regional and local networks with around a hundred partners.
- FELM's "most important international networks are the [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation, and the [ACT Alliance](#)."
 - Both the [WCC](#) and the [ACT Alliance](#) play key roles in mobilizing churches worldwide to support [BDS campaigns](#) against Israel.
- FELM's [partners](#) in the "Middle East" include Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and [East Jerusalem YMCA](#) (see above).
- FELM does not provide details of the projects or amounts it grants to partners.
- According to the Israeli Registrar of Nonprofits, in 2023-2024, FELM granted NIS 180,000 to [Baladna Arab Youth Association](#).
 - In July 2024, Baladna co-published a handbook titled "[To exist is to resist. Handbook for Volunteers to Palestine](#)." According to the handbook, "The Palestinian struggle has been ongoing for almost a century, despite the nonstop escalating violence of the Zionist colonization. The Palestinian struggle is a struggle for liberation, liberation of the land and of the people, from the ongoing Nakba, ongoing colonization, ongoing apartheid." The handbook advises volunteers not to "fly with EL AL or Arkia (or any other Israeli company: Sun d'Or, Up, Isrir). EL AL is the state of Israel airline and Arkia is a low-cost flight company. A very powerful non-violent tool to support the Palestinian cause is to support the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions to Israeli companies, institutions, etc.) so if you want to support the Palestinian cause, we would suggest you to think of it further than your volunteering action....They will not like that you are travelling to the West Bank so try to tell them something else...Check your social media public posts and either delete them or hide them or change your name in that social media so it is more difficult to find...don't bring materials that can relate you to having been in the West Bank and, above all, DON'T bring materials that can compromise the organisations you have visited. You are leaving back home, they are staying under occupation."
 - In February 2023, Baladna [developed the card game](#) "Jalma," in which "the players must play prisoners suspected of throwing stones, whose goal is to obtain the 'Somod cards' in order to escape from the prison to security prisoners."

Indirect Funding via UN Frameworks

Funding to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- Finland provided [€3 million](#) (2021-2024) to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for a project entitled "[Transformative Resilience in Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza](#)."

- Concerns about transparency and accountability in UNDP allocations persist, as no information is available on specific funding amounts or the identities of the NGO recipients of this project. According to the Israeli Registrar of Nonprofits, NGOs receiving funding via the UNDP (2023-2024) include: Bimkom, [Breaking the Silence](#), [B'Tselem](#), [Gisha](#), Yesh Din, 7amleh, Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATI).

Funding to the World Food Programme

- In [2024](#), Finland provided €3.2 million to the World Food Programme for the “Food Security Cluster.”
 - The [members of the Food Security Cluster](#) include the [Union of Agricultural Work Committees](#) (UAWC), identified by Fatah as an official “[affiliate](#)” and by [USAID-engaged audit](#) as the “agricultural arm” of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a terrorist organization designated as such by the [US](#), [EU](#), [Canada](#), and [Israel](#).
 - In January 2022, the Dutch Foreign Minister announced that the [Netherlands will cease all funding](#) to the Union of Agricultural Works Committee (UAWC). According to the Minister, the investigation determined that UAWC had 34 employees with ties to the PFLP in 2007-2020, 12 holding leadership positions in the terrorist group concurrent to their employment at UAWC. In reporting to parliament, Ministers de Bruijn and Knapen added that “the large number of board members of UAWC with a dual mandate is particularly worrying.”
 - Other NGOs that receive funding under the Food Security Cluster, include, [Applied Research Institute Jerusalem](#) (ARIJ), [Première Urgence Internationale](#) (PUI), Oxfam Italia, and [Oxfam GB](#). These NGOs support BDS and other overtly political campaigns against Israel.