



I Ben-Maimon Blvd.
Jerusalem, Israel 92262
Phone: +972-2-566-1020
Fax: +972-77-511-7030
mail@ngo-monitor.org
www.ngo-monitor.org

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Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg

I thank the committee for inviting me to address this important forum. Before my remarks, I wish to note that I have no connection with, nor receive any funding from the Israeli or any other government, and do not speak on behalf of anyone other than myself and NGO Monitor, which is an independent Israeli civil society organization.

I am here to discuss the policies of and the role played by the European Union (EU) in funding numerous Palestinian, Israeli, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and “civil society” organizations (CSOs). The EU provides large sums of taxpayer funds for political advocacy through programs such as Partnership for Peace, the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy (EIDHR), EMHRN, and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

The declared intentions are positive, but when the details of this funding are examined, many problems emerge. Projects supported by the EU systematically ignore Palestinian attacks, while condemning Israeli responses, with blanket accusations of “racism,” violations of “all international human laws and rules,” “torture”, “never ending colonial and expansionist desires,”¹ sexual attacks against Arab women,² and similar incendiary allegations. EU projects fund Palestinian-led conferences to plan the “Extra-judicial Executions and Prosecution of Israelis

¹ ARIJ, Toward annexing Palestinian lands to the Israeli State: “New Israeli Military Orders to Fortify the Apartheid Israeli Segregation Plan in Hebron Governorate,” February 7, 2009.

² Mada al-Carmel, “My Land, Space, Body and Sexuality: Palestinians in the Shadow of the Wall,” November 9, 2009. Available at: <http://www.jensaneyya.org/english/shownews.php?ID=467>

Suspected of Committing War Crimes,”³ with proceedings broadcast on Al Jazeera clearly showing the banner thanking the European Union.⁴ You can understand how this is seen in Israel, and how it affects relations between Israelis and the European Union.

These are not isolated exceptions. NGO Monitor’s systematic research during the past eight years, analyzed through the models of conflict management and negotiation, demonstrates that, in practice, much of this EU funding does not match the intentions.⁵ No evidence has been produced showing that these programs have contributed to a stable and lasting two-state solution. Instead, the evidence demonstrates that many of the recipients fuel the conflict, increase the already formidable barriers to compromise and mutual acceptance between Israelis and Palestinians, create friction between Europe and Israel, and empower divisive groups and individuals.

EU-funded political advocacy organizations lead the campaign embodying the “third generation” of warfare against Israel. These NGOs are key participants in BDS (boycotts, divestment, and sanctions), “lawfare,” and demonization campaigns, based on the 2001 Durban NGO Forum in which 1,500 NGOs adopted the strategy of “complete and total isolation of Israel as an apartheid state ... the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive sanctions and embargoes, the full cessation of all links (diplomatic, economic, social, aid, military cooperation and training) between all states and Israel.”⁶ The goal, as clearly stated in many publications and speeches, is to end Jewish national self-determination using the façade of human rights.

Consistent and blatant NGO biases and double standards are also undermining the moral foundations of universal human rights, through cynical double standards, false or unverifiable

³ PCHR, “PCHR Co-hosts Cairo Conference on Extra-judicial Executions and Prosecution of Israelis Suspected of Committing War Crimes,” November 9, 2008. Available at: <http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/PressR/English/2008/2008/53-2008.html>

⁴ PCHR, “The Principle and Practice of Universal Jurisdiction: PCHR’s Work in the Occupied Palestinian territory,” 2010, p. 175. Available at: http://pchrgaza.org/files/Reports/English/pdf_spec/PCHR-UJ-BOOK.pdf

⁵ Steinberg, Gerald M. “Europe’s Hidden Hand: NGO Monitor study on EU funding for political NGOs in the Arab Israeli conflict.” NGO Monitor Monograph Series, April 2008. Available at: http://www.ngo-monitor.org/data/images/File/NGO_Monitor_EU_Funding_Europes_Hidden_Hand.pdf

⁶ “WCAR NGO Forum Declaration, SANGONeT, September 3, 2001 <<http://www.racism.org.za/index-2.html>>.

allegations, and distorted versions of international law. In sharp contrast to the central role of EU-funded NGOs in promoting the Goldstone Report that falsely indicted Israel for alleged “war crimes,”⁷ we found few instances in which EU-funded human rights organizations spoke out clearly against abuses by Palestinians. Neither have EU-funded groups advanced the human rights of Israelis.

Instead, behind the façade of civil society – which, in a democracy such as Israel’s, grows out of that society – the EU and its member states are seen as giving public funds to a small number of opposition groups in an effort to manipulate the political process. In violation of the principle that democracies do not attempt to manipulate or interfere with the internal political processes in other democracies, anonymous European officials in charge of NGO allocations seek to exploit a minority group of Israelis to impose EU-favored policies on the wider Israel public. (While Europe provides funds that give these NGOs influence in Israeli society, the EU and its member states share none of the costs when misguided peace efforts fail, including mass terror and many Israeli deaths.)

Furthermore, the EU’s extreme secrecy with respect to funding and evaluation processes for these political NGOs, in violation of due process and transparency, increases this damage. No EU official has offered legitimate reasons for such extreme secrecy with respect to funding for civil society organizations. If the extensive EU funding provided to Israeli and Palestinian political advocacy groups is justifiable, the process and protocols should be published.

In response to this secrecy, the elected representatives of the Israeli public are debating legislation to provide the missing transparency. The very loud officials of favored Israeli NGOs and their friends fiercely oppose this transparency and publication of the protocols and evaluations involved in the European Commission’s funding process, suggesting a fear that this will lead to reduced funds for waging demonization campaigns.

⁷ “Made in Europe: How government funded NGOs shaped the Goldstone report.” NGO Monitor Report, October 1, 2009. Available at: <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/european-government-funding-ngos-and-the-goldstone-report>

To further understand the central issues related to EU funding for political NGOs, I will now provide detailed analysis of these points, in the time allotted to me, and with caution that far more discussion is required in order to understand the complexities.

1) Advocacy NGOs – another obstacle to peace

More than ten years of EU funding via the PfP, EIDHR, and other programs, involving tens of millions of euros, has resulted in few significant achievements. Without independent professional evaluations of EU allocations for NGOs – if such documents exist – conclusions about the impacts are tentative, but it is clear that the wider mutual distrust and hostility between Israelis and Palestinians has not declined. Instead, detailed analysis demonstrates that much of the EU funding for these NGOs has been counterproductive to the peace process.

A number of EIDHR and PfP recipients, as well as EMHRN member organizations, are very active in the BDS and lawfare campaigns that target Israel, or deny the right of self-determination for the Jewish nation via “one-state solutions.” These NGOs include PCHR (the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, based in Gaza), ARIJ (Applied Research Institute Jerusalem), the Coalition of Women for Peace, Adalah, HRA (Arab Human Rights Association), Mada al-Carmel, and ICAHD (Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions).⁸

ARIJ, a powerful Palestinian advocacy group that receives a large portion of its budget from European governments, including 15% from the EU, has been funded for many years through grants from PfP for a project headlined “Monitoring actions and transformations in the Palestinian Territory to develop policies and strategies for conflict management”⁹ (€874,000 from 2004-2011, and an unknown amount from 2000-2004). Since no independent evaluations of ARIJ’s impact

⁸ “EC’s Partnerships for Peace 2007-8 NGO Grantees: Funding Conflict under the Façade of Peace.” NGO Monitor Report, April 6, 2009. Available at: http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/ec_s_partnerships_for_peace_ngo_grantees_funding_conflict_under_the_fa_ade_of_peace;

“EIDHR: Additional European Funding for Mideast Conflict Groups.” NGO Monitor Report, March 16, 2010.

Available at: http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/eidhr_additional_european_funding_for_mideast_conflict_groups0

⁹ The EU Partnership for Peace Programme, “Cooperation and funding, Call for proposals 2007.” Available at: http://d157696.si27.siteam.co.il/english/content/cooperation_and_funding/3.asp

have been published by the EU, the results of this massive funding, and its contribution to advancing peace and tolerance, are far from clear.

ARIJ's website refers to this EU-funded project as "Monitoring Israeli Colonizing Activities in the Palestinian West Bank & Gaza." Phase III of the project is clearly designed to promote the Palestinian political war by "disseminating information on Israeli colonization by monitoring Israeli colonization activities."¹⁰

In contrast to the language of tolerance and compromise, ARIJ uses the rhetoric of conflict in the EU-funded monitoring project, with allegations of Israeli "denial of all international human laws and rules," and refers to "racism acts."¹¹ In another example, ARIJ charges that "Israel is seeking to loot as much as possible of the Palestinian lands to fulfill its never ending colonial and expansionist desires."¹²

Similarly, PCHR is a direct recipient of EIDHR funding, and has also received EC money as a partner of Oxfam NOVIB (a process that is usually undocumented), through the project entitled "Awareness Raising and Lobbying against the Death Penalty in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (EC Internal No. 98779)." This organization is a major pillar of the "lawfare" tactic, which is part of the wider Durban strategy of political warfare against Israel. In April 2006, PCHR organized a conference in Malaga, Spain, in conjunction with the Al-Quds Malaga Association, entitled "Bringing Cases Against War Criminals: Universal Jurisdiction."¹³ The aim of the conference was "to establish and develop contacts which could be used to enhance and strengthen future universal jurisdiction activities." In 2008, PCHR held a coordinating conference in Cairo on "Extra-judicial

¹⁰ ARIJ, "About the Project, Monitoring Israeli Colonizing Activities in the Palestinian West Bank & Gaza." Available at: http://www.poica.org/proj-objectives/proj_obj.php

¹¹ ARIJ, "Manipulation of legal terms: The real intentions of the Israeli occupation military orders," February 11, 2009. Available at: http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=1803

¹² ARIJ, "Toward annexing Palestinian lands to the Israeli State: 'New Israeli Military Orders to fortify the Apartheid Israeli Segregation Plan in Hebron Governorate,'" February 7, 2009.

¹³ PCHR, "The Principle and Practice of Universal Jurisdiction: PCHR's Work in the Occupied Palestinian territory," 2010, p. 133. Available at: http://pchr.org/files/Reports/English/pdf_spec/PCHR-UJ-BOOK.pdf

Executions and Prosecution of Israelis Suspected of Committing War Crimes.”¹⁴ The proceedings were broadcast on Al Jazeera, with a backdrop consisting of a large sign, “Impunity and the Prosecution of Israeli War Criminals,” and an acknowledgment to the EU and Oxfam/NOVIB. One session was devoted to case strategy regarding PCHR’s criminal suit in Spain against seven Israeli officials. Another session presented ways to have Israelis prosecuted at the International Criminal Court.

EU-funded NGOs are also centrally involved in the campaigns based on false allegations of Israeli “war crimes,” particularly with respect to the responses to rocket attacks from Gaza. The leaders of an organization known as ICAHD promote the “one state solution,” thus fuelling the conflict. ICAHD is also one of the NGO sponsors of the Free Gaza flotilla,¹⁵ which, as recent events made clear, works closely with Hamas and Hezbollah in seeking confrontation with Israel. The tragic results of these violent activities are all too visible. The EU has funded ICAHD since at least the 1999 PfP allocations. (In 2009, PfP funding for ICAHD ended, but EU funding continued via EIDHR – without explanation, and highlighting the secrecy in this process.)

Mada al-Carmel and two other NGOs (Women Against Violence, which is also funded by the EU, and the Arab Forum for Sexuality, Education and Health) organized an event headlined “My Land, Space, Body and Sexuality: Palestinians in the Shadow of the Wall.” Publicity included a poster portraying an Israeli soldier reaching suggestively toward a Palestinian woman, with the caption: “Her husband needs a permit to touch her. The occupation penetrates her life everyday!”¹⁶ Falsely suggesting that Israeli soldiers sexually assault Palestinian women, this image and the language reflect another dimension of incitement.

¹⁴ PCHR, “PCHR Co-hosts Cairo Conference on Extra-judicial Executions and Prosecution of Israelis Suspected of Committing War Crimes,” November 9, 2008. Available at: <http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/PressR/English/2008/2008/53-2008.html>

¹⁵ Free Gaza Movement, “Endorsers” Available at: <http://www.freegaza.org/en/about-us/who-we-are/136-endorsers>

¹⁶ Mada al-Carmel, “My Land, Space, Body and Sexuality: Palestinians in the Shadow of the Wall” November 9, 2009. Available at: <http://www.jensaneya.org/english/shownews.php?ID=467>

These and similar activities, led by EC-funded NGOs, do not promote a culture of peace, but rather work against compromise and exacerbate distrust and hostility between Israelis and Palestinians. (The excuse that EU funding is provided to projects, not organizations, is not convincing. In many cases, such as PCHR, the projects directly funded by the EU contribute to the conflict. In the other cases, since money is fungible, and a number of controversial Israeli opposition NGOs – Ir Amim, on the explosive issue of Jerusalem; Breaking the Silence; HaMoked; the Public Committee Against Torture (PCATI); Gisha; Bimkom; and others – receive over half (and in some cases, 70 or 80 percent) of their funding from the EU and its member states, the responsibility of the funders for the activities is undeniable.)

2) Manipulating democracy under the façade of “civil society”

In addition, large-scale EU and European government funding to Israeli NGOs from a very narrow sector has angered many Israelis who view it as a form of manipulation and neo-colonialism. In sharp contrast to its neighbors, Israel is a democratic society, and citizens, both as individuals and members of NGOs, engage in intense debates on the issues of war and peace; occupation, settlements, and security; human rights, humanitarian aid, and Gilad Shalit. For Israelis, these issues are vital to the core questions of national survival.

Israelis are also aware that opposition groups enjoy a major and unfair advantage in these debates, and in the marketplace of ideas, through massive funding provided by the EU and European governments. Organizations supported by the EU have a clear advantage in terms of the funds and personnel necessary to hold frequent press events, create media visibility for their leaders, organize rallies and marches, advertise in the main newspapers, lobby the Knesset, petition the courts, and hold politicized academic events. Given the high percentage of their budgets

provided by Europe, it is understandable that many Israelis view these organizations as European and as representing European interests.¹⁷

Earlier EU funding via Peace Now aimed at convincing Israeli Jews from Russia to change their political views (“This activity would focus on a social group that traditionally has anti-peace views and votes Likud.... The other components of the project would be an outreach to Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union”) is clearly manipulative, and ill-conceived.¹⁸

The same is true for a new PfP project designed to persuade Israeli journalists to take favorable positions on the controversial Saudi/Arab League Peace plan. The Israeli media reports that the EU is providing close to €6,000 per participant for 60 Israeli journalists to attend seminars, meetings, and two eight-day retreats with other participants in Turkey. The NGOs funded by the EU to set the agenda for these meetings, Neve Shalom and Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (CCRR), are themselves part of the problem. CCRR, a Palestinian NGO, calls for the boycott of Israeli academics or Israeli academic institutions that support “the occupation” (“for more than 50 years,” i.e., since 1948).¹⁹ However, due to the lack of transparency in the EU, there is no information to explain this strange and counterproductive framework.

Through this secretive NGO funding process, the EU also selects favored members of Israeli civil society – particularly in the Israeli-Arab sector. The radicalization of these organizations and the increasing friction between the Arab/Palestinian and Jewish sectors coincides, to a significant degree, with the funding received by Adalah, Mada al-Carmel, and other groups. Haneen Zoubi, an Israeli-Arab citizen who was elected to the Knesset in 2009 and was a prominent activist aboard the

¹⁷ Steinberg, Gerald M. “Manipulating the marketplace of ideas,” Haaretz, November 29, 2009. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/manipulating-the-marketplace-of-ideas-1.3288>

¹⁸ Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 1999, Ad hoc selection committee for People to People/Permanent Status Issues projects in support of the Middle East peace process, budget line B7-4100, European Commission, Directorate General External Relations, Middle East, South Mediterranean.

¹⁹ “EU funding pushes the Arab Peace Initiative among Israeli journalists.” NGO Monitor Report, April 22, 2010. Available at: http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/eu_funding_to_promote_the_arab_peace_initiative_among_israeli_journalists

recent IHH/ISM Free Gaza flotilla, gained substantial visibility through her role as head of the NGO known as I'lam, which received over €900,000 from the EU's EIDHR and gender frameworks. While the selection and elevation of particular individuals among the Israeli-Arab minority may not be part of the EU's official NGO funding policy, this is clearly the result.

The role of EU funding in adding to the tensions among Israeli citizens can also be attributed to the false portrayal of societal divisions in Israel as a problem of “civil” or “minority” rights. These terms, which are used to justify support to groups like Mada al-Carmel, Adalah, and Mossawa, mask an intense and often violent ethno-national and religious conflict, rather than *a priori* discrimination. In contrast, EU-funded organizations use the language of discrimination and civil rights, but their agendas reflect hostility to Israel as a Jewish state. The “Haifa Declaration” (Mada al-Carmel 2007) calls for a “change in the definition of the State of Israel from a Jewish state” and accuses Israel of “exploiting” the Holocaust “at the expense of the Palestinian people.”²⁰ At an “academic conference” entitled “Has the Two-State Solution Collapsed?” several participants advocated for a “one-state solution.” Nadim Rouhana, who heads Mada al-Carmel, claimed that “a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that relies on partition cannot be a just one. The partition resolution was based on the appropriation of part of Palestine, exceptionally granting it to the Zionist movement.”²¹ Mada al-Carmel organized a conference in January 2010 where Hussein Abu Hussein, chairman of the board of Ittijah (of which Mada al-Carmel is a member), said, “Israel is a racist state, and a racist state cannot guarantee or create a culture of justice. It creates a racist and aggressive culture.”²² This is the rhetoric of war, not peace, and it is funded by the European Union.

²⁰ Mada al-Carmel, “The Haifa Declaration,” May 15, 2007. Available at: <http://www.mada-research.org/UserFiles/file/haifaenglish.pdf>

²¹ Mada al-Carmel, “Has the Two-State Solution Collapsed?,” July 2009. Available at: <http://www.mada-research.org/?LanguageId=1&System=Item&MenuId=4&PMenuId=4&CategoryId=4&ItemId=345>

²² Mada al-Carmel, “Legal Action: Aspects, Goals, and Challenges,” January 2010. Available at: <http://www.mada-research.org/?LanguageId=1&System=Item&MenuId=4&PMenuId=4&CategoryId=4&ItemId=393>

3) Undermining the moral foundations of universal human rights, through double standards, false allegations, and distorted international law

In addition, political advocacy NGOs, many of which are funded by the EU, distort international law to issue one-sided condemnations of Israel. At the same time, they belie their claim to be working for universal human rights by giving very little attention to the rights of Israelis, or of Palestinians under threat from Hamas. While EU-funded NGOs have issued hundreds of reports condemning Israel, they have shown very little concern for the rights of the children from Sderot who have spent their childhood under bombardment from Gaza. These NGOs and their EU funders also show far more concern about the availability of jam and chocolate for Gaza than about freedom for Gilad Shalit, now held for four years. This is shameful.

An example of NGO distortions of international law can be seen in their allegations regarding Nizar Rayan, a senior Hamas commander involved in the planning and execution of numerous mass terror attacks. He was killed during the Gaza war after refusing to evacuate himself and his family members from his home – which was also a Hamas weapons storage compound – despite repeated Israeli warnings.²³

European government-funded PCHR called Rayan's death a "heinous crime" and insisted that the "perpetrators and their military and political leaders must be prosecuted."²⁴ Without any basis in international law, the NGO continues to list him as a civilian in its widely quoted casualty statistics from the war.²⁵

²³ After the warnings, Israel observed a group of civilians leaving the compound, and therefore assumed that all its residents had left. Rayan and some his relatives were killed in the subsequent bombing of the weapons storage site.

²⁴ PCHR, "IOF Offensive on the Gaza Strip Continues for the 7th Consecutive Day," January 2, 2009. Available at: <http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/PressR/English/2009/125-2008.html>

²⁵ IDC ICT Report, "'Cast Lead' Casualties Report," April 2009. Available at: <http://www.ict.org.il/ResearchPublications/CastLeadCasualties/tabid/325/Default.aspx>

B'Tselem also condemned the strike, calling it a “grave breach of international humanitarian law,”²⁶ and Adalah (also funded by the EU) referred to the case as an example of an “indiscriminate” and “disproportionate” bombing, claiming it was a “war crime” and that “those who make such decisions and execute them bear personal criminal responsibility.”²⁷ This is another absurd NGO effort to exploit the language of international law. The Israeli strike was clearly directed at a legitimate military objective, and therefore was not indiscriminate.

Similar distortions are apparent in NGO campaigns labeling the Israeli blockade on Gaza, following the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit and then the Hamas coup, as “collective punishment.” Following the Free Gaza flotilla violence, NGOs including the Arab Cultural Forum, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), Al Mezan, International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), and ICAHD issued one-sided condemnations of Israel²⁸ while neglecting Shalit, whose kidnapping in 2006 and four years of captivity are gross violations of human rights and international law.

The double standards and political bias repeatedly demonstrated in the declarations of the EU’s EMHRN and Anna Lindh Foundation further erode the universality and moral foundations of human rights norms. All of the Israeli NGO members either represent the Arab minority or fringe opposition groups from the Jewish sector, whose views generally coincide with those of the Palestinian NGO members.²⁹ There are no voices that reflect the views and positions of the wider Jewish citizens of Israel, resulting in highly politicized agendas that add further to the double standards.

²⁶ B'Tselem, “The killing of Nizar Rayan and 15 members of his family,” January 4, 2009. Available at: http://www.btselem.org/English/Gaza_Strip/20090104_Killing_of_Nizar_Rian_and_13_Family_member.asp

²⁷ Adalah, “The Killing of Civilians in the Gaza Strip,” January 4, 2009. Available at: <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/custom?q=cache:jTJkJe-OVMIJ:www.adalah.org/features/gaza/Letter%2520Killing%2520Civilians%2520in%2520Gaza%255B1%255D.doc+nizar&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk>

²⁸ “NGO Campaigns and the ‘Free Gaza Flotilla.’” NGO Monitor Report, June 1, 2010. Available at: http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/ngo_campaigns_and_the_free_gaza_flotilla_

²⁹ EMHRN, List of Members, November 4, 2008. Available at: <http://en.euromedrights.org/index.php/members/3058.html>

For example, under the banner of the Anna Lindh Foundation, the ICAHD organization is the Israeli partner in a summer camp.³⁰ ICAHD promotes a highly politicized narrative of the conflict, accusing Israel of apartheid, ethnic cleansing, state terrorism, and “bloody and sadistic actions in Gaza.” ICAHD also partners with radical NGOs to promote BDS and campaigns against a two-state solution.³¹ This indoctrination is the opposite of the Anna Lindh Foundation’s mandate of “improv[ing] mutual respect between cultures.”³²

Babelmed is another EU-funded program³³ with activities that contrast directly with the peace process. This on-line Euro-Med culture magazine highlighted the “My Land, My Space” campaign involving EU-funded Mada al-Carmel.³⁴ Gianluca Solera, Network Coordinator of Anna Lindh Euro-Med Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, published an article in *Babelmed* that included highly offensive language:³⁵

[Israel’s] Neurons [sic] have been worn out so much that even the god Yahweh has aged too much to think and cannot free himself from the role of god of the armies. Operation “Cast Lead” was launched at the end of a Shabbat, Saturday afternoon 27 December. I can imagine those aged generals and young pilots praying to their god before giving the order to attack or getting into their fighter planes. A lost generation has been created, without universal ideals, and hence extremely dangerous. The adolescents of Jihad kill out of desperation, the boys of Tsahal out of idolatry.

EMHRN also reflects political exploitation of human rights and morality as part of anti-Israeli demonization. Most of its statements on the conflict include calls for action against Israel, and one-sided condemnations of Israeli responses to terrorism. EMHRN provides a platform for and promotes the views of its member NGOs, which include highly politicized Palestinian NGOs such

³⁰ Anna Lindh Foundation Euromed, “Mount Hebron Summer Camp.” Available at:

<http://www.euromedalex.org/fields/education-youth/projects/mount-hebron-summer-camp>

³¹ “Israel Committee against House Demolitions,” NGO Monitor NGO Index. Available at: http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/israel_committee_against_house_demolitions_icahd_

³² Anna Lindh Foundation Euromed, “About Us.” Available at: <http://www.euromedalex.org/about>

³³ European Commission-Youth, “Babelmed Association,” March 31, 2009. Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_form_en.cfm?EID=42000558687

³⁴ *Babelmed*, “My Land, Space, Body and Sexuality: Palestinians in the Shadow of the Wall,” November 24, 2009. Available at:

http://www.babelmed.net/Countries/Mediterranean/Culture_and_society/my_land.php?c=4747&m=143&l=en

³⁵ *Babelmed*, “Disgust,” January 9, 2009. Available at:

<http://www.babelmed.net/Countries/Israel/disgust.php?c=3885&m=18&l=en>

as PCHR, Al Mezan, and Al Haq, as well as Israeli opposition NGOs Adalah, B'Tselem, and PCATI.

The centrality of aggressive political lobbying in EMHRN is illustrated by repeated calls for the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. In August 2005, EMHRN issued a highly biased and unprofessional report entitled “Israel’s Human Rights Behaviour, 2004-2005,” which condemned Israel’s construction of its security barrier and its security policies in the West Bank and Gaza, but failed to mention the Palestinian terrorism that caused these measures. At an EMHRN training seminar in 2007, participants discussed why the EU has not yet imposed sanctions on Israel. The consensus was that “sanctions would most likely only be effective if the US were to join in.”³⁶

Following the Free Gaza flotilla incident, EMHRN issued a statement (May 31, 2010) which falsely reported that Israel “acted illegally by violently and unjustifiably targeting civilians.”³⁷

All of the actions under the banner of the European Union contribute to the perception that human rights and moral principles are simply another form of political warfare to be used by organizations that target Israel, and exclude views that present the Israeli perspective. The result is highly damaging in terms of the moral standing of these principles, to understate the case.

4) Secret funding and evaluation processes, in violation of the EU’s own transparency

claims

As noted, there is no transparency or accountability regarding EU funding of these political advocacy organizations, and there is no way to determine whether due process was followed, leaving many questions: Who performs the evaluations of NGOs for the EU, and do these

³⁶ “The EU-Israel Action Plan within the European Neighbourhood Policy: What is the Impact of the EU-Israel Action Plan on Human Rights in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories?” Training and Seminar,” April 2007. Available at: <http://en.euromedrights.org/files.php?force&file=emhrn-publications/The-EU-Israel-Action-Plan-within-the-European-Neighbourhood-Policy.pdf>

³⁷ EMHRN, “EMHRN condemns the Israeli naval attack against ‘Gaza Freedom Flotilla,’” May 31, 2010. Available at: http://en.euromedrights.org/index.php/news/emhrn_releases/67/4393.html

individuals have political or other interests that could distort their judgment? Are the evaluators connected, directly or indirectly, to the NGO recipients, or their political and ideological biases? The pattern of funding over the past decade, in terms of the small number of repeat recipients, many of which are fringe opposition groups in Israel, suggests possible violations of due process.

The leaked minutes from a 1999 meeting of the ad-hoc selection committee for People to People/Permanent Status Issues projects in support of the Middle East peace process suggests that these are valid concerns.³⁸ The total refusal of the EU to release the documents relevant to the decision-making process in this extremely important area means that these suspicions regarding EU funding for NGOs will grow.

5) Knesset NGO transparency legislation

The EU's extensive secrecy for NGOs leading this demonization is entirely inconsistent with democratic principles. In this atmosphere, members of the democratically elected Knesset have proposed legislation to demand transparency in NGO funding from foreign governments. As noted, the favored NGOs and their supporters oppose this transparency, fearing its impact. The proposed legislation will require timely and detailed reporting, giving the Israeli public more awareness of the scope of foreign government funding. Condemnations of this legislation as threatening free speech referred to some minor amendments that were removed. Rather than simply repeating these false NGO claims, MEPs would be better served by asking their Israeli counterparts in different parties, including Social Welfare Minister Isaac Herzog (Labor) and Coalition Chair MK Zeev Elkin (Likud) for the details of the legislation.

The attempt by certain European officials to delegitimize this internal Israeli debate in order to justify EU policies is seen by Israelis as further interference in our internal affairs. The UN's "Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation

³⁸ Minutes of the meeting held on September 29, 1999, Ad-hoc selection committee for People to People/Permanent Status Issues projects in support of the Middle East peace process, budget line B7-4100, European Commission, Directorate General External Relations, Middle East, South Mediterranean.

among States” (UNGA, 1970) and “Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States” (1981) recognize the wider concepts of democratic non-interference, as does the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act.

In closing, I will draw your attention to two positive programs, funded under the latest PfP grants, which are in many ways the models that the EU should be following to promote peace and cooperation. Projects such as “Save a Child’s Heart” and “Playing for Peace – Strengthening Community Relations through Football,” run by grantee organizations that do not engage in destructive political advocacy, fulfill the stated goals of the PfP framework, and are outstanding examples of the positive impact of EU assistance.

But, as I have shown, these are rare exceptions in terms of EU-funded civil society programs. Most of the money is used to politicize human rights and to preach to Israelis who have lived through decades of hatred, violence, and terror. The results are clearly counterproductive. The EU has an obligation to its own constituents, and to the Israelis and Palestinians whose lives are impacted by these policies, to conduct a fully transparent, impartial, and professional inquiry into and re-evaluation of funding policies and processes for highly politicized NGOs.