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Daniel Fink
Deputy Director of Government Affairs
NGO Monitor
13 Tel Hai Street
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(by email)

Dear Mr Fink,

RE: DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE

Thank you for your letter of 12 March to the Ambassador, which has been passed to me for reply. I apologise for the delay in doing so.

The British Government believes that it is vital to avoid the disgraceful anti-Semitism that occurred at the time of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism. We remain in close contact with civil society representatives, including from Jewish interest groups, to this end.

We want the 2009 Durban Review Conference to contribute to the global fight against racism and anti-Semitism, and are working with EU partners to achieve this. Early signs are that this will be difficult, but we are trying to influence the outcome from a position of engagement.

The UK had regular meetings with British NGOs in the run-up to and during the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban. We were aware of the many reports of anti-Semitic behaviour at the parallel NGO conference, but not of any specific allegations about the involvement of British NGOs or their representatives.

The venue, date and agenda for the Durban Review Conference have yet to be decided. This will be discussed at the forthcoming Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva. As such, no decisions have yet been taken about NGO involvement. We have therefore not considered the detailed questions on NGO behavior at the Durban NGO Forum.

You also asked specifically about Israeli and Palestinian NGOs which receive funding from the British Government. We will continue to fund projects carried out by Israeli and Palestinian NGOs which we believe will contribute to achieving the vision of a two-state solution in which Israel and Palestine co-exist in peace and security.

Regards,

Adam Sambrook
Second Secretary (Political)

cc: Prof Gerald Steinberg, Executive Director, NGO monitor

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