

Due Diligence and Accountability?

The Negative Impact of U.S. Government Funding
for Mideast Political NGOs

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Making NGOs Accountable

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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.

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Conflict Management and Mitigation Fact Sheet, October 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This NGO Monitor report relates to U.S. government funding for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that operate in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, specifically to groups whose activities contribute to the political campaigns designed to demonize and delegitimize Israel.

Our detailed analysis shows that, in many cases, these NGO activities directly contradict U.S. government support for peace efforts and for promoting Palestinian democracy. Grants are awarded without due diligence, there is no requirement for independent evaluations prior to grant renewals, and there are pronounced inconsistencies between stated objectives and the implementation of funded projects.

Recommendations include publication of clear guidelines and criteria whose violation would prevent an NGO from receiving funding, and the independent and systematic monitoring of the activities of the NGO grantees (replacing reliance on claims made by the NGOs themselves).

KEY FINDINGS

1) NGO Monitor has analyzed U.S. government funding for NGOs claiming to promote peace and human rights in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The report documents artificially narrow and misleading criteria in assessing grant proposals, resulting in funding for NGO applicants whose activities sharply contradict program objectives and policies, as well as reliance on evaluations from the NGOs themselves, rather than independent analysis.

2) The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funds political advocacy NGOs that promote BDS (boycotts, divestment, and sanctions) campaigns targeting Israel, and contributed to the discredited Goldstone Report (2009) on the Gaza war and other forms of demonization. This activity is entirely inconsistent with U.S. policy. NED-funded groups include Al-Dameer, Gaza Community

Mental Health Programme, Holy Land Trust, MIFTAH, Palestinian NGO Network, Women's Affairs Technical Committee (Palestinian).

3) NED funded MIFTAH (\$178,740; 2007-2012), a Palestinian NGO centrally involved in anti-Israel campaigns and antisemitism, including repetition of the infamous blood libel and allegations of "the slaughter of Palestinian children," "massacre," "cultural genocide," "war crimes," and "apartheid." NED officials acknowledged that in evaluating MIFTAH's proposal involving youth leadership they did not consider the NGO's wider activities. In providing renewals for six years, NED reported relying on MIFTAH's own evaluations, without any independent examination.

4) USAID funds a number of Israeli political advocacy NGOs, including Parents Circle Family Forum, Keshev, H.L. Education (Geneva Initiative), and Windows – Channels for Communication. The presentations and political activities of Parents Circle Family Forum (\$1.61 million from USAID, plus \$120,000 from USIP, 2010–2013) often promote a one-sided narrative of the conflict. The activities of this NGO are the subject of intense controversy and criticism in Israel, particularly from other bereaved parents who do not share the same political views. (Appendix 10-11).

5) Windows' "Youth Media Program," (\$750,000 from USAID, 2010–2013) is described as "a tool for Israeli and Palestinian participants to learn about each other and to communicate with each other about the conflict." However, this program has become a platform for incitement and promotion of conflict, including comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany. The degree of supervision exercised over the use of funds is unclear.

6) Officials from Sikkuy, funded by USAID, have published opinion articles that include allegations of racial discrimination and have contributed to efforts to portray Israeli Arabs as an indigenous minority subject to discrimination, as part of a wider political process seeking to delegitimize

the recognition of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people.

7) A number of NGOs have received U.S. government funds in multiple years and from multiple funding frameworks. The evidence suggests that officials involved in administering the funding do not have the information necessary to assess the overall activities and agendas of the NGO grantees, or to verify claims in the NGO submissions and reports.

8) USAID funds a number of Israeli political advocacy NGOs that are directly involved in central domestic political debates, raising questions about interference in the Israeli democratic processes.

CONTRADICTIONS FROM USG FUNDING AGENCIES

1) In response to queries to USAID, NED, and MEPI on these issues, NGO Monitor received general statements on guidelines and processes, but few concrete responses. Some funder declarations are inconsistent with U.S. foreign policy goals or best-practices for NGO funding. For example, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) justified funding for NGOs that use hate speech and promote anti-Israel campaigns, stating²:

NED is a bipartisan American institution whose mission is to help build peaceful civil societies. Accordingly, it does not take positions on matters of public policy or controversy. We do not support groups that incite hatred or violence. **That said, we would not withdraw support for a group simply because its views on issues, or the language its members use to describe events, may be controversial or even in some respects objectionable. Grantees are judged not on their rhetoric but rather on their ability to implement effective democracy-building projects.**

This response negates the moral and legal responsibility of the funder for the activities of the grantee, and the clear contradiction between hate speech and “democracy-building projects.”

2) USAID replied that “continuation of all or part of the funding for a program [could] be suspended or terminated because such assistance would not be in the national interest of the United States or would be in violation of an applicable law.” However, NGO Monitor found no instance of termination or suspension by USAID.

3) Regarding funding for the controversial **Parents Circle Family Forum**, USAID repeated the NGO’s claim to be able to reach “more than an estimated 6,000 new people.” There is no indication of the mechanisms to be used to achieve this ambitious goal, or regarding monitoring of the activities and the messaging, to prevent the abuse of this framework by this NGO, as in past activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the detailed analysis in the report, NGO Monitor urges U.S. officials to conduct detailed and independent evaluations of the NGO activity **before** grant allocation and **during** implementation. Independent evaluations should be conducted **at the conclusion** of the grant cycle, to prevent renewal of funding for NGOs whose activities are inconsistent with policy objectives (such as involvement in demonization). **All USG funding agencies should be required to assess NGO applicants on the basis of all their activities and agendas, and not only on the basis of narrowly defined projects.**

Before grant allocation

Potential recipients should be evaluated for consistency with U.S. policy.

The evaluation process should be broad and include input from multiple sources.

Funding should be denied to NGOs that engage in demonization, BDS, and other anti-Israel activities, which are contrary to and incompatible with U.S. peace efforts, the promotion of human rights, and democracy building.

During

Guidelines should be created to regulate situations and reconsider funding where evidence of problematic activities and rhetoric emerges while the grant is ongoing.

Information about all grants, including detailed descriptions and evaluations of programs, should be posted in a centralized database, as well as on the websites of the managing agency.

After

Detailed, independent, and public assessments are necessary, both in terms of (a) measuring the efficacy in accomplishing the stated goals of the project and (b) monitoring the full extent of the grantee's activities.

Transparency

We urge greater transparency and public access to all aspects of all U.S. government NGO funding decisions, as well as open and continuing dialogue with Israeli representatives and the public on these crucial matters

INTRODUCTION

And just as we've been there with our security assistance, we've been there through our diplomacy. When the Goldstone report unfairly singled out Israel for criticism, we challenged it. When Israel was isolated in the aftermath of the flotilla incident, we supported them. When the Durban conference was commemorated, we boycotted it, and we will always reject the notion that Zionism is racism. When one-sided resolutions are brought up at the Human Rights Council, we oppose them.

– President Barack Obama at AIPAC Policy Conference, March 4, 2012

The U.S. government allocates major funding for democracy development, peace building, and other important political objectives, and some of this money is distributed to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This report provides an independent evaluation of funding provided to political advocacy NGOs that operate in Israel and the Palestinian Authority. As will be shown, a number of these grantees advance narrow politicized agendas and/or demonize and delegitimize Israel. In many cases, these NGO activities directly contradict American policies in support of peace efforts, and that there are pronounced inconsistencies between stated objectives and implementation of funded projects.

On the basis of this detailed analysis, NGO Monitor urges U.S. officials to conduct a full and detailed review of the activities of these highly politicized NGOs. NGO Monitor also urges greater transparency regarding the funding processes and public access to all forms of NGO funding provided by the U.S. government.

This systematic report is addressed to the key stakeholders, including

- Members of Congress who appropriate funds for USAID's Conflict Management and Mitigation Program, the National Endowment for Democracy, and others;

- Officials in the State Department and elsewhere directing these programs and advising on priorities;

- Diplomats in the Middle East involved in the decisions and in a position to supervise and evaluate the NGO grantees;

- Other officials from the State Department, USAID, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and United States Institute of Peace (USIP); and

- Israeli government officials and other decision and opinion makers (NGO activities and funding are high on the public agenda in Israel).

As part of our efforts to critically engage on these issues, earlier drafts of this report were sent to officials from the State Department and USAID for comment. In preparing the report, we also corresponded with officials from USIP and NED. Their detailed responses are appreciated, contributed substantively to this report, and have led to greater funding transparency.

It should be noted that the U.S. government's responsiveness and willingness to "review carefully" its policies stand in sharp contrast to the secrecy practiced by many European countries and, in particular, the European Union.

Letters of inquiry were also sent to State Department officials in the Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Consulate in Jerusalem responsible for the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). In contrast to the replies from USAID, NED, USIP, and other State Department officials, MEPI representatives did not engage substantively on questions pertaining to grants and NGO partners.

Correspondence with the International Republican Institute (IRI) elicited a strong statement on the antisemitism of one of its 2011 grantees (see below), but officials did not provide information on grantmaking for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs in 2009-2013.

Responses from the U.S. government, as well as other correspondence related to U.S. government funding for NGOs, are included as appendices at the end of this report.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

According to its website, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is funded “largely by the U.S. Congress” and is “subject to multiple layers of oversight by Congress, the Department of State, and independent financial audit.”³ These audits could not be found on NED’s website.

MIFTAH

Between 2007 and 2012, NED provided \$178,740 to MIFTAH, according to the NGO’s financial reports and documents provided to NGO Monitor by NED.⁴

The first of MIFTAH’s Strategic Objectives is “to disseminate the Palestinian narrative and discourse globally to both official and popular bodies and decision-makers.”⁵

Among its other highly political activities, MIFTAH accuses Israel of “the slaughter of Palestinian children,”⁶ “massacre,”⁷ “cultural genocide,”⁸ “war crimes,”⁹ and “apartheid.”¹⁰

In response to President Obama’s March 2012 AIPAC speech, MIFTAH’s founder and Chair of the Executive Committee Hanan Ashrawi stated, “We could not believe that an American president is out there proving that he is good for Israel.”¹¹ She also accused the United States of continuing “to subvert all efforts at achieving a just peace, and presents itself as complicit in Israel’s persistent violations of international law and Palestinian rights.”¹²

A July 5, 2006 article (Joharah Baker, “Palestinian Women and the Intifada,” deleted in April 2013, screenshot available here) describes how Palestinian women “also decided to join the ranks of the resistance movement.” The article cites suicide bomber Wafa Idrees as “the

beginning of a string of Palestinian women dedicated to sacrificing their lives for the cause.”

On March 27, 2013 MIFTAH published an Arabic-language article, in response to President Obama’s support for Israel and his celebration of the Passover Seder, repeating the antisemitic blood libel. The author wrote, “Does Obama in fact know the relationship, for example, between ‘Passover’ and ‘Christian blood’...?! Or ‘Passover’ and ‘Jewish blood rituals...?! Much of the historical stories and tales about Jewish blood rituals in Europe are based on real rituals and are not false as they claim; the Jews used the blood of Christians in the Jewish Passover ...” (translated from the original Arabic by NGO Monitor). After significant public criticism, MIFTAH removed the article and posted an apology in English (but not Arabic).

- In correspondence with NGO Monitor in April 2013, an NED official wrote, “The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has been working for many years through its grants program to strengthen Palestinian civil society. Because the development of future leaders is particularly critical to that effort, NED has provided funding for the young leaders program of the organization MIFTAH for the past several years. MIFTAH’s most recent funding application was not renewed at our recent board of directors meeting in light of additional demands for NED resources in a rapidly changing MENA region. MIFTAH’s web site, the source of recent controversy, has never been supported by NED, whose grants program is not involved with Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.”

- When asked by the Jerusalem Post about how NED ensured that its funding did not go to MIFTAH’s website, NED “had no additional comment.”¹³

Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP)

The Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) received \$21,700 in 2011 to conduct training sessions ostensibly to “promote rights-based concepts among attorneys representing victims of abuse.” GCMHP also supports anti-Israel boycotts¹⁴ and demonizes Israel for committing a “massacre.”¹⁵ Officials from GCMHP made highly offensive remarks during the Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict hearings in Gaza (June 2009): Eyad Sarraj, president of GCMHP, said, “inside Israel there is an identification with the aggressor, the Nazis.”

Al-Dameer

Al-Dameer, an organization which has engaged in anti-Israel demonization by referring to terrorists as “martyrs” and speaking of the Palestinian “right to resist,” was awarded \$102,200 by NED.¹⁶

Holy Land Trust (HLT)

NED also granted the NGO Holy Land Trust (HLT) \$124,300. HLT is a signatory to the 2005 “Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS”¹⁷ and supports the Kairos Palestine document, which calls for BDS (boycotts, divestment, and sanctions) against Israel and denies the Jewish historical connection to Israel.¹⁸ HLT conducts highly politicized tours¹⁹ targeting church leaders and the international community, claiming to provide “cross cultural and experimental learning opportunities in both Palestine and Israel.”²⁰ The NGO suggested in 2010 that its participants “limit information” given to Israeli airport security and hide the reason for their visits.²¹

HLT’s executive director Sami Awad, speaking at the National Leadership Conference for the Vineyard Church in 2009, told the audience: “We’ve actually done training in non-violence for Hamas leaders and other militant groups as well.”²² Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department

and the EU.²³ Further, the US Supreme Court upheld a law criminalizing material support for terror organizations. The law defines “material support” as including “any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including... training, expert advice or assistance...”²⁴

Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)

The Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) received a \$34,700 grant from NED in 2011. PNGO, an umbrella organization of 132 Palestinian NGOs, played a leading role in a boycott of USAID funding, following US government demands that NGO grantees sign anti-terrorism clauses as part of their funding agreements.²⁵ As part of this campaign, PNGO wrote that the anti-terror clause “ignores the legal Palestinians’ right of resistance against the Israeli occupation.”²⁶ An unnamed PNGO official also commented, “They are telling us what to do and they interfere in internal politics,” describing the US list of terror groups as an attempt to “create internal conflict among Palestinians.”²⁷

Women’s Affairs Technical Committee (WATC)

Women’s Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) has been awarded \$103,500.²⁸ WATC utilizes “apartheid”²⁹ rhetoric and is a signatory³⁰ to the call for boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.³¹

Correspondence with NED

In correspondence with NGO Monitor, a NED official justified funding for these NGOs: “NED is a bipartisan American institution whose mission is to help build peaceful civil societies. Accordingly, it does not take positions on matters of public policy or controversy. We do not support groups that incite hatred or violence. That said, **we would not withdraw support for a group simply because its views on issues, or the language its members use to describe events, may be controversial or even in some respects objectionable.** Grantees are judged not on their rhetoric but rather on their ability

to implement effective democracy-building projects”.* (emphasis added)

This statement appears to deny that rhetoric can “incite hatred or violence.” However, some of the language employed by NED grantees does just that. The use of immoral, demonizing rhetoric is the antithesis of basic human rights values, an impediment to democratic change, and an essential component of evaluating an NGO’s “ability to implement effective democracy-building projects.”

Transparency

A number of NGOs receive NED funds year after year. Some of these organizations, highlighted above, have been awarded grants in multiple years despite their use of demonizing rhetoric and anti-Israel activities, suggesting the absence of an independent review process.

Publicly available information for NED grants is incomplete. For example, Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) received a \$185,416 grant in 2009, but this grant for a highly political NGO is not listed on NED’s website, and no evaluation materials appear to be available for this program.³²

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

USAID, the United States’ largest provider of foreign assistance, contributes grants to political advocacy NGOs in Israel through its Office of

* Officials from NED were responding to questions from NGO Monitor:

“NED reports show funding for the NGOs MIFTAH, Holy Land Trust, and al-Dameer. What is NED’s reaction to and position on the following:

(a) MIFTAH’s use of hate speech in its publications, such as allegations of ‘the slaughter of Palestinian children’ and ‘massacre,’ in order to demonize Israel?

(b) Holy Land Trust’s suggestion that its participants ‘limit information’ given to Israeli airport security and hide the reason for their visits?

(c) Executive Director and Founder of Holy Land Trust Sami Awad’s statement that non-violent demonstrations are ‘not a substitute for the armed struggle.’

(d) Al-Dameer’s participation in anti-Israel demonization, including allegations of ‘genocide’ and ‘racism?’”

Conflict Management and Mitigation, which “supports several initiatives to foster peace at the grassroots level through programs that develop mutual understanding and build ties between Israeli and Palestinian youth leaders, religious scholars, environmental scientists, educators and community activists.”³³ According to USAID, “Since the program’s inception in 2004, USAID West Bank and Gaza Mission and U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv have supported 55 Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) grants for Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.”³⁴

According to an October 2012 USAID fact sheet,³⁵ Israeli NGOs that received funding for active or recently completed programs through the “Peace and Reconciliation Program,” a subset of CMM, include Keshev, H.L. Education (Geneva Initiative), Windows – Channels for Communication, Sikkuy, and Parents Circle Family Forum. Parents Circle Family Forum is also funded by the United States Institute of Peace, discussed below.

The October 2012 list is more comprehensive than earlier public data. A December 2011 fact sheet was incomplete.³⁶ NGO Monitor research revealed a joint Givat Haviva-Keshev project that, prior to correspondence with U.S. officials, did not appear on USAID’s website.

Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP)

It is noteworthy that 19 of the 28 NGOs on the October 2012 fact sheet, including the NGOs discussed below, are members/endorsers of Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP)³⁷, a group created “to raise the profile of Middle East coexistence in the minds of key stakeholders and policymakers so that these activities would be viewed as a critical part of solving the conflict.”³⁸ ALLMEP claims that it “proposed”³⁹ the reconciliation program managed by USAID/CMM, and that it maintains “ongoing contact with appropriate U.S. officials responsible for NGO funding.”⁴⁰ This suggests a conflict of

interest between the advisory process and the grant recipients.

Parents Circle Family Forum

Parents Circle Family Forum (two twenty four month grants: \$810,000, “History through the Human Eye: the Israeli-Palestinian Narrative Project,” 5/2010 – 5/2012; \$800,000, “Where Parallel Lines Meet,” 9/2011 – 9/2013). The Parents Circle Family Forum is a joint Israeli and Palestinian organization, comprised of individuals who “have lost a close family member as a result of the prolonged conflict” and claiming that “that the reconciliation between individuals and nations is possible.”⁴¹ The Parents Circle website states that the NGO “has no stated position on the political solution of the conflict,” but officials often use this platform to promote their personal political views. The presentations and political activities indicate that the NGO is highly ideological, and promotes a one-sided narrative of the conflict (see Appendix 6). This organization is the subject of intense controversy and criticism in Israel, particularly from other bereaved parents. (This NGO is also funded by USIP. See below.)

An April 25, 2012 article in *Ha'aretz* reported on a fundamental divide between the willingness of Israelis and Palestinians to participate in Parents Circle events. According to the article, “a gala event of the Bereaved Families Forum was relocated from the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour to metropolitan Israel, after 220 out of 300 Palestinian participants pulled out.” Similarly, monthly dialogue sessions in Beit Jala “have become rare.” Additionally, one project was significantly changed due to “skepticism and disinterestedness on the Palestinian side.”⁴²

In response to questions from NGO Monitor, USAID asserted that Parents Circle would achieve wide impact in mitigating conflict, conjecturing “that each participant will talk to at least 5-10 people about the experience and the message of the possibility of reconciliation.” This “significant ripple effect” will reach “more than an estimated 6,000 new people,” according

to USAID. No indication was provided on how such ambitious goals could be achieved, and on how USAID intends to ensure that the message is one of mutual understanding, and not a repetition of the Palestinian narrative.

Windows – Channels for Communication

Windows (three-year grant, \$750,000, “Youth Media Program”) claims to “promote acquaintance and understanding between participants and empowerment towards active citizenship and positive change,”⁴³ and is described by USAID as “a tool for Israeli and Palestinian participants to learn about each other and to communicate with each other about the conflict,” However, its “Youth Media Program,”⁴⁴ which consists of “alternative media” and a Hebrew-Arabic Youth Magazine, adopts a Palestinian narrative of the conflict.⁴⁵

This program has become a platform for incitement and promotion of conflict, including highly offensive comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany (see Appendix 7).⁴⁶ Examples include “When I saw the movie about the Holocaust, I saw how cruel and insensitive the Nazi army was towards the Jews. I felt compassion for them, although the Jews treat us like the Germans treated them.” and “They think they have the right to this land because of the suffering they experienced in the Holocaust. I want to say that we, the Palestinians, have a right to the land, and they are the ones who came here, expelled us, and occupied us...In my opinion, history is repeating itself, even if there are small differences.”

The degree of supervision exercised over the use of funds is unclear.

H.L. Education

Funding (31-month grant [extended beyond the original 18-month timeframe], \$528,594, “Influencing the Attitudes and Perceptions of Key Israeli Players”) for H.L. Education programs (the “Geneva Initiative”) also reflects manipulation

of the Israeli democratic process, including an August 2010 public campaign focusing on peace negotiations. The original version of the H.L. Education press release stated “[t]he campaign is supported with the generous support of the American people through USAID” and featured the USAID logo.⁴⁷ The statement and logo were subsequently removed.

Evaluations for the H.L. Education project “Influencing the Attitudes and Perceptions of Key Israeli Players,” which concluded in November 2011, have not been made publicly available.

Keshev

Keshev is receiving a three-year grant, \$1,000,000, for “Press for Peace: Improving the Israeli and Palestinian Media and Public Discourse,” and a sub-award of \$403,873 for a two-year joint project with Givat Haviva, “Communicating Peace.” According to the Keshev website, “Keshev promotes a more moderate media...Keshev urges media editors to carry out the duties incumbent upon media in a democracy and teaches news consumers to evaluate news coverage more critically...”⁴⁸ These are subjective terms that contrast with Keshev’s narrow partisan and ideological agendas, as well as efforts to manipulate Israeli media.

For instance, in a report funded by USAID, Keshev, without evidence, accused the Israeli media of “ignoring the wider context of the story and Israel’s responsibility for the continuation of the conflict.”⁴⁹ In another USAID-sponsored report regarding the “Free Gaza Flotilla’s” confrontation with the Israeli Navy, Keshev alleged that “the message that the activists tried to present against the policy of blockade [of Gaza]...remained outside the public discourse in Israel.”⁵⁰

Sikkuy

Sikkuy, which claims to “advance equality between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel” and to address “barriers” to equality and development,

through advocacy and involvement in local government, is receiving a three-year, \$1,061,275 grant to improve economic opportunities for Israeli Arabs.⁵¹

Although many of Sikkuy’s publications do not reflect a blatant bias or ideological agenda, a number of opinion articles by Sikkuy officials, notably Co-Executive Director Ali Haider, publish allegations of racial discrimination to demonize Jewish citizens and leaders.

- For example, in a December 2012 op-ed, Haider accuses Israel of “racism” and identifies the Israeli government as one of the main reasons for violence within Israeli Arab society.⁵²
- In response to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s 2011 speech to Congress⁵³, Haider claimed that “Arab citizens do not enjoy true democratic rights” and questioned whether Israel is even a democracy.⁵⁴

Sikkuy has also contributed to efforts to portray Israeli Arabs as an indigenous minority subject to discrimination, as part of a wider political process seeking to delegitimize the recognition of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people.⁵⁵

MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is a division of the Department of State’s Near Eastern Affairs Bureau.

In correspondence with NGO Monitor, officials responsible for MEPI in Israel and the West Bank did not respond to questions concerning grants and NGO partners.

MEPI has awarded grants to IPCRI and Keshev, which, as noted above, also receive funding from USAID and NED.

Lack of Transparency

MEPI funding is not transparent. Though some programs are listed on its country-specific

websites, neither the year nor amount is published. MEPI provides a link in its FAQs section to the generic usaspending.gov website as a way to search for MEPI's grants, but no instructions are provided to find these specific grants.

Shatil, which is the central operative arm of the New Israel Fund (NIF), is listed as one of MEPI's Israel partners. However, the organization does not appear as a recipient of MEPI funding in usaspending.gov search results. Shatil and the NIF are also involved in major political advocacy activities in Israel.⁵⁶

Other programs highlighted on MEPI's website do not appear in database searches, including funding for the Creative Associates Community Leadership Empowerment Program (CLEP)⁵⁷ and the International Republican Institute.⁵⁸

According to MEPI's website, CLEP "has supported approximately 80 awards in over 70 different locations in the West Bank and Gaza. To date, Creative Associates has awarded or committed approximately **\$2.2 million in assistance**, with an average of \$25,000 per project and at a rate of 9 new projects per month." These programs are not listed on the website, and the partner organizations are unknown.

Funding for International Republican Institute

The International Republican Institute (IRI) is a "nonprofit, nonpartisan organization" that "receives its funding through grants from the U.S. State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy."⁵⁹

According to IRI's website, "IRI's West Bank and Gaza program is funded by the Middle East Partnership Initiative [MEPI]."⁶⁰ This information appears to date from 2010.

It is unclear whether MEPI still funds IRI. In correspondence with NGO Monitor, MEPI representatives did not answer questions regarding support for IRI.

IRI contributed \$455,950 directly to Miftah in 2007 and 2008.⁶¹

In correspondence with NGO Monitor regarding the "blood libel" incident, IRI wrote, "We too are appalled by the offensive claims made in the article by Nawaf al-Zaru posted on MIFTAH's site on March 27, 2013. We also agree that MIFTAH's initial statement in response to this incident was not satisfactory and note that MIFTAH has since issued an apology and explanation. We have asked MIFTAH for a full account of how this article was selected for inclusion on the group's website as we consider what further actions to take in response to this objectionable incident."

IRI officials did not respond to requests for information on grantmaking for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs in 2009-2013.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is an "independent, nonpartisan institution established and funded by Congress."⁶²

USIP currently funds a \$120,000 program with Parents' Circle, an organization also funded by USAID, as noted.⁶³

Project evaluations are not available to the public.

ENDNOTES

1 See http://www.ngo-monitor.org/articles.php?cat_id=33 for more information on BDS campaigns.

2 Correspondence between NED and NGO Monitor. See Appendix 5 for full texts.

3 <http://www.ned.org/about>

4 <http://www.miftah.org/Programmes/FinancialStatements/fs-2007-final.pdf>; <http://www.miftah.org/Programmes/FinancialStatements/fs-2008-final.pdf>; <http://www.miftah.org/Programmes/FinancialStatements/fs-2009-final.pdf>; <http://www.miftah.org/Programmes/FinancialStatements/fs-2010-final.pdf>

5 <http://www.miftah.org/AboutUs.cfm>

6 <http://miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=5203&CategoryId=32>

7 <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=18398&CategoryId=2>

8 <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=21763&CategoryId=2>

9 <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=18583&CategoryId=3>

10 <http://www.miftah.org/display.cfm?DocId=21987&CategoryId=3>

11 <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Mar-06/165748-stop-shielding-israel-palestinians-tell-obama.ashx#axzz1p5E2yM58>

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