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SPANISH GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR NGOs: 2009–2011

Assessing Transparency, Accountability, and Impact on Israel

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NGO Monitor Monograph Series



Making NGOs Accountable

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Spanish government funding, in different forms, is allocated to a number of Palestinian, Israeli, and Spanish NGOs that are among the leaders in ideological campaigns to delegitimize Israel via BDS, lawfare, and other forms of demonization.

Between 2009 and 2011, approximately €15 million in Spanish government funds have been transferred to political advocacy NGOs active in promoting this agenda through the different funding frameworks (€5 million to Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, and €10 million to Spanish NGOs.). Grantees include some of the most radical groups operating in Israel and the Palestinian authority:

Applied Research Institute Jerusalem: **€176,637 (2011), €849,715 (2010) and €98,347 (2009-2010)** for “planning for the geopolitical future of Jerusalem.” ARIJ is active in promoting BDS and other forms of anti-Israel delegitimization, including membership in the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign and support for the global anti-Israel boycott movement; ARIJ employs the rhetoric of “ethnic cleansing,” “transfer,” “land grab,” and “colonization activities” in its publications.

Breaking the Silence (BtS): **€173,188 (2011), €180,763 (2010) and €24,790 (2009).** In May 2011, *El País* published a feature story on BtS, and the members of this fringe group have appeared in numerous public events, facilitated by the funding received from the Spanish government. BtS promoted many of the “war crimes” accusations against Israel repeated in the now discredited Goldstone Report, based on anonymous and unverifiable hearsay “testimonies.” Their claims are central to delegitimization.

Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions: **€181,508 (2009-2010).** Promotes the demonization of Israel, supports boycotts and divestment campaigns, and leads the “Gaza boat” publicity missions.

Founder Jeff Halper advocates for a one-state formula that would eliminate Jewish self-determination rights. ICAHD rhetoric includes accusations of Israeli “apartheid,” “bloody and sadistic actions,” and “atrocities.”

Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC): **€107,700 (2011).** PSCC says it “aims at strengthening international support networks and their direct ties to the struggle for liberty in Palestine.” According to its mission statement, PSCC promotes a “unique form of community based organizing and resistance in the tradition of the first Palestinian Intifada.... These diverse, non-partisan committees lead community resistance to Israeli occupation in various forms, such as marches, strikes, demonstrations, direct actions and legal campaigns, as well as supporting boycott, divestment and sanctions.”

Xarxa d’Enllaç amb Palestina: Funded by Barcelona and Catalonia, in May 2012, Xarxa organized a concert in Barcelona to mark the Palestinian Nakba; in May 2011, Xarxa signed a letter titled “Enrique Iglesias, don’t sing for the Israeli apartheid!,” which advised the Spanish musician against performing at a concert in Israel on May 30.

In March 2012, Spain’s new conservative government announced austerity measures that would cut the total Spanish foreign affairs budget, including development aid, by at least €1.4 billion in 2012. In response, some 500 Spanish NGOs published an “open letter” to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy asking him to make a commitment to maintaining the previous Socialist government’s focus on funding development cooperation.

The levels of transparency and accountability for NGOs funding at Spain’s federal, regional, and municipal levels are often highly inadequate; the process by which AECID chooses projects and awards contracts to NGOs operating in the Palestinian Authority is opaque, and AECID has insufficient supervisory mechanisms to

determine how NGOs use government aid funds. Only a small handful of Spanish NGOs receiving government money actually publish annual reports that would enable the general public to assess how taxpayer monies are being utilized.

In 2012, the OECD published a Peer Review of Spanish development funding, which criticized the lack of oversight mechanisms and evaluation systems in the aid budget.¹

¹ See “Spain: Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Peer Review 2011,” Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *available at* <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/45/49356882.pdf>



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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.